

# RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH

## Community Group Discussion Guide – Life In Technicolor Week #2

*When Life is The Pits* / September 19, 2021 / Pastor Paul Taylor



### GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Question | Would You Rather...
  - ... be chronically underdressed or overdressed?
  - ... have all traffic lights you approach be green or never have to stand in line again?
  - ... be able to teleport anywhere or be able to read minds?
2. Icebreaker Question | It was nice to have a little bit of “normal” back this summer. What are one or two normal things you enjoyed this summer?
3. What are you looking forward to most about being in a Community Group this Fall? If this is your first experience with a small group at Rivers Crossing, what led you to join?
4. If your group is new, or you’re an existing group welcoming new members, getting to know each other’s personal story/background is a fantastic place to start building community. While there are many ways you can do this, here’s a simple structure you can use: The “2x4” Story – Spend two minutes talking about four aspects of your life: family of origin, current family, spiritual journey, and desired future.

### DIVING DEEPER

5. The story of Joseph, especially the periods where Joseph’s life “is the pits” (i.e., terrible; dreadful), is an examination of God’s providence. By providence, we’re referring to the governing power of God that oversees his creation and works out his plans for it. Read the following Scriptures on God’s providence and discuss the corresponding questions.

**Genesis 50:20 (ESV)** – As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

**Job 42:2 (ESV)** – “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”

**Isaiah 40:25-26 (NLT)** – <sup>25</sup>“To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?” asks the Holy One. <sup>26</sup>Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars? He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name. Because of his great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing.

**Colossians 1:16-17 (ESV)** – <sup>16</sup>For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

**Daniel 4:37 (ESV)** – Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

**Luke 12:6-7 (NLT)** – <sup>6</sup>“What is the price of five sparrows—two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. <sup>7</sup>And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

**Romans 8:28 (NLT)** – And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

a) What stands out to you from these Scriptures about God’s providence?

b) When we find ourselves in a pit – no matter how we got there – how can knowing about and trusting in God’s providence be a comfort to us? How do you think it was a comfort to Joseph?

6. Pastor Paul shared that nothing will test our character more than when life is the pits. It might also be said that nothing will test our relationship with God more than when life is the pits.

a) When you find yourself in a difficult season of life, are you more inclined to reach out to God with greater intensity or to isolate from God? Explain your answer.

b) The Bible provides a template for communicating with God in the midst of our pain, suffering, and injustice. That template is called a lament. Over a third of the Psalms are laments and there is an entire book of the Bible called Lamentations. A lament can be defined as a prayer in pain that leads to trust. Typical laments include the following elements<sup>1</sup>:

*1. This definition and structure of Biblical lament are adapted from Pastor Mark Vroegop.*

Turning to God by talking with God about our pain.

Complaining to God by vocalizing circumstances that don’t seem to fit God’s character or purposes.

Asking God for deliverance that fits with God’s character.

Trusting God and his purposes hidden behind the pain.

Read the following passages from the Psalms to see these elements of lament in the prayers of the people of God. Then discuss the corresponding question.

**Psalms 77:1-3 (NIV)** – <sup>1</sup>I cried out to God for help; I cried out to God to hear me. <sup>2</sup>When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted. <sup>3</sup>I remembered you, God, and I groaned; I meditated, and my spirit grew faint.

**Psalms 13 (NIV)** – <sup>1</sup>How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? <sup>2</sup>How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? <sup>3</sup>Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, <sup>4</sup>and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,” and my foes will rejoice when I fall. <sup>5</sup>But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. <sup>6</sup>I will sing the Lord’s praise, for he has been good to me.

Borrowing from this concept of Biblical lament, how can you grow in communicating with God when you experience disappointment, pain, or even deep suffering?

## TAKING IT HOME

7. The life of Joseph reminds us that no matter how deep the pit, God can pull us out, set us back on solid ground, and use our pain for his purpose. But in the middle of the pit, we have to do the heart (and often hard!) work of diagnosing how we landed in the pit.
  - a) Do you have an example of God using “a pit” in your life to grow your faith and further develop your character? If so, share that with your group.
  - b) If you’re in a pit right now, share about this with your group. What’s your working diagnosis for how you got there? Did you put yourself in the pit through your choices, were you thrown into the pit by someone else, or is the pit a result of living in a broken world? What’s your next step?

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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## RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. Baptisms – Sunday September 26<sup>th</sup> | We believe baptism is an integral part of your spiritual journey and necessary as you seek to become a fully engaged follower of Christ. If you've recently decided to follow Jesus or you've been a Christ follower for a while but never gotten baptized, now is the perfect time to take this next step! Learn more and sign up by visiting <https://riverscrossing.com/baptism/>.
2. 2022 Discipleship School | Discipleship School is a one-year program that helps Christians from all backgrounds become fully engaged followers of Christ. The school helps students learn to hear God’s voice clearly, experience a full and free life, develop intimacy with God, develop Christlike living, and understand their spiritual gifting. For more information, or to apply for the Discipleship School, click on the link below. <https://riverscrossing.com/discipleship-school/>
3. Plan A Visit | Have an individual or family you want to invite to Rivers Crossing? If so, we’d love for them to utilize our Plan A Visit tool. Share this link with them: <https://connect-card.com/zTE3I3TXmFG0TgizStLj>.



## COMMUNITY GROUP MISSION & VISION

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### Groups Mission:

To provide people an opportunity to experience loving community as they pursue becoming a fully engaged follower of Christ.

### Community Groups Vision:

To gather together regularly to share, study the Bible, and support one another. Community Groups are sermon-based, meaning they study a set of Bible passages and questions connected to the previous weekend's sermon.

### Healthy Community Groups:

Community Groups are designed so that we can love and care for one another and put God's Word into action – all in pursuit of experiencing and living the extraordinary life. As you lead, keep the following in mind for evaluating the health of your group:

- **ENGAGE:** Groups are only successful when people invest their time and energy to genuinely engage the process by attending regularly, being honest, and developing relationship with other group members. This takes time, but it's worth it.
  - *Acts 2:42-27, Colossians 3:12-17*
- **ENCOURAGE:** One of the primary roles your group will play is in encouraging one another forward in your individual walks with Christ. This includes supporting one another through the messiness and trials of life.
  - *Hebrews 10: 23-25*
- **EQUIP:** Regularly encountering God's Word through the sermon, group discussion, and personal study will, over time, equip each group member to be a more fully engaged follower of Jesus. As this information permeates the heart, the Holy Spirit will provide application and personal growth.
  - *2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 14:25-26*
- **EMPOWER:** As your group meets, you will see some people naturally begin to exhibit spiritual gifts including leadership, shepherding, and hospitality. Be on the lookout for these developments. Empower these individuals to step into larger roles within the group, to consider leading or hosting their own group, or to serve where led.
  - *Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 3:10-14*
- **EXPAND:** As each member of your group begins to invest in their "8 to 15," it's natural for your group to add new members and to connect others into groups ministry.
  - *John 13:34-35*