

10-22-25 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide: Job's Devastation & Our Thankfulness

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word and to help the group see areas where worldly desires may be replacing devotion to Him.

Ice Breaker (5-10 minutes)

****Question:**** Share about a time when you lost something valuable (material possession, opportunity, or relationship). How did that experience affect your perspective on what you truly need versus what you want?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. ****We live luxuriously compared to most of the world**** - Even our "necessities" would be considered luxuries in many places
2. ****Thankfulness is essential to spiritual sanity**** - Focusing on what we're grateful for keeps us balanced
3. ****We can become enemies of God**** - Friendship with the world equals hatred toward God (James 4:4)
4. ****Job's response to devastation**** - Despite losing everything, Job worshiped and didn't charge God with wrongdoing
5. ****Our desires battle within us**** - We must distinguish between needs and wants
6. ****Focus on neighbors, not media personalities**** - We'll be judged more by how we treat those around us than by our opinions about distant people

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Understanding Our Blessings (15 minutes)

****Read Job 1:13-22****

1. What struck you most about Job's response to losing everything in a single day? How would you honestly respond in similar circumstances?
2. The pastor mentioned that Paul said we should be content with just "food and clothing" (1 Timothy 6:8). What are three things you consider necessities that would actually be luxuries to most of the world?
3. How has abundance affected your ability to be thankful? Do you find it easier or harder to give thanks when you have much?

Section 2: The Enemy Within and Without (15 minutes)

****Read James 4:1-8****

4. James says "friendship with the world is hatred toward God." What does "friendship with the world" look like practically in 2024? What are some subtle ways we might be flirting with the world?
5. The sermon mentioned that we have desires that "battle within us." What's the difference between godly desires and worldly desires? Share an example of when you've experienced this battle.
6. How can we become "enemies of God" even as Christians? What warning signs should we watch for in our own lives?

Section 3: Thankfulness as Spiritual Sanity (15 minutes)

****Read 1 John 2:9-17****

7. The pastor shared about the Israeli hostage who maintained sanity by finding things to be thankful for daily, even in captivity. What would be on your gratitude list if you lost most of what you have?
8. How does focusing on what we don't have versus what we do have affect

our spiritual health and relationships?

9. "Our sanity as Christians is really based upon our thankfulness to God."
Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Section 4: Loving Our Actual Neighbors (15 minutes)

Read 1 Timothy 6:3-10

10. The pastor challenged us to focus less on media personalities and politicians and more on people in our actual lives. How much of your emotional energy goes toward people you've never met versus people you see regularly?

11. Who are your actual neighbors - the people God has placed in your daily path? Name 2-3 specific people and one need they might have.

12. What would change in your life if you spent a month only focusing on ministry opportunities in your immediate neighborhood and workplace?

Personal Reflection (5 minutes)

Take a moment of silence for each person to consider:

- In what area of my life am I most demanding that God give me what I want rather than trusting Him with what I need?
- What am I most thankful for that I rarely acknowledge?
- Who is one neighbor God is calling me to love this week?

Practical Applications

Choose 1-2 applications to commit to this week:

Individual Actions:

- **Daily Gratitude Practice:** Each day this week, write down 5 specific things you're thankful for, including things you normally take for granted (running water, electricity, health, etc.)
- **Media Fast:** Take a break from news and social media for 3-7 days and use that time to pray for people you actually know
- **Neighbor Awareness:** Make a list of your actual neighbors (those who live near you, work near you, or cross your path regularly) and pray for one specific way to bless each one
- **Contentment Inventory:** Audit your recent purchases and prayers - are you asking God for needs or wants? Practice praying "God, You are all I need"

Group Actions:

- **Neighborhood Prayer Walk:** Walk through your neighborhood together, praying for specific households
- **Service Project:** Identify someone in your community with a genuine need and meet it together as a group
- **Thankfulness Testimonies:** Next week, share stories of how practicing gratitude changed your perspective

Closing Discussion (5 minutes)

Question: What is one specific thing God spoke to you about during this discussion? What will you do about it this week?

Closing Prayer

Pray together:

- Thanking God for specific blessings mentioned during your discussion
- Asking for eyes to see neighbors as Jesus sees them
- Requesting strength to resist friendship with the world

- Seeking contentment in God alone
- Praying for those facing Job-like devastation in your community

For Next Week

- Read Job chapters 2-3
- Come prepared to discuss: "How do we maintain faith when God seems silent in our suffering?"
- Practice one of the applications chosen by your group

Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to group members who may be going through loss or hardship
- Avoid political debates; redirect to personal application
- Encourage specific, practical commitments rather than general intentions
- Follow up during the week with group members about their applications