

12-17-25 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide: Finding God's Voice in Dark Times

Based on Job 14 and Psalm 22

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to help your group hear His voice clearly and to shift focus from circumstances to His character.

Icebreaker Question

When something unexpectedly good happens to you, how do you typically respond? What about when something unexpectedly bad happens? What's the difference in your reactions?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

Job lacked the scriptural foundation we have access to - He relied on reasoning rather than God's written promises.

We need "handles" in Scripture - Multiple passages to grab onto during overwhelming times.

God speaks more than we realize - Especially during our pain, but we often can't hear Him because we're focused on our hurt.

The pattern of shifting focus - From pain to praise, from self to Savior, repeatedly throughout trials.

Our default assumption should be realistic - Expect both good and bad in this world, not constant ease.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

Job's Limited Knowledge

Read Job 14:1-5, 10-14. What truths about God was Job speaking even without having Scripture?

How does having the complete Bible change our ability to handle suffering compared to Job?

The Psalm 22 Pattern

Read Psalm 22:1-5, then verses 22-27. What pattern do you notice in how David (and Jesus) handled overwhelming circumstances?

Why is it significant that Jesus may have been trying to get others to sing this psalm with Him on the cross?

Mary and Zechariah's Songs

Read Luke 1:46-55 and 1:67-79. What do these songs focus on despite their unusual circumstances?

What can we learn from Zechariah's nine months of silence before he could speak praise?

Personal Reflection

Your Spiritual Handles

What are 2-3 Scripture passages you can "grab onto" when facing difficulty? If you don't have any, which ones from tonight's sermon might you memorize?

Share a time when a Bible verse sustained you through a hard season.

The Victim Mentality

The pastor mentioned our culture creates victims who focus on their pain. How have you seen this (in yourself or others)?

What's the difference between acknowledging real pain and

wallowing in victimhood?

Hearing God's Voice

When was the last time you practiced being still and quiet before God? What happened?

What "noise" in your life most prevents you from hearing God speak?

Application and Growth

The "Count the Cost" Principle

The pastor mentioned we deserve hell, so anything better is grace.

How does this perspective change how you view your current circumstances?

Is this perspective depressing or freeing? Why?

Rejoice, Pray, Give Thanks

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. The pastor called this "God's secret sauce." Why is this trio so powerful for overcoming hurt?

Which of these three is hardest for you in difficult times?

When Bad Things Happen

The pastor suggested we should have a "go-to" response when bad things happen. What could yours be instead of a curse word or complaint?

How can we prepare spiritually for trials before they come?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Scripture Memorization

Memorize one "handle" verse from tonight (Job 14:5, Psalm 22:3-5,

or Luke 1:46-49)

Write it on a card and read it three times daily

Option 2: Darkness and Silence

Spend 15 minutes in a dark, quiet space three times this week

Simply be still and ask God if He has anything to say to you

Journal what happens (even if it's "nothing")

Option 3: The Shift Practice

When you catch yourself complaining or focusing on pain this week,
immediately speak or write three truths about God's character

Track how this affects your emotional state

Option 4: Gratitude in Difficulty

Identify one current difficulty in your life

List 5 things you can genuinely thank God for related to or despite
this situation

Share this list with one person

Group Prayer Time

Prayer Prompts:

Pray for group members facing specific trials to hear God's voice
clearly

Ask God to help you shift focus from circumstances to His character

Thank God for specific "handles" in Scripture He's given you

Pray for the discipline to practice stillness and listening

Accountability Partners:

Pair up and share:

One area where you're struggling to trust God right now

Which practical application you're committing to this week

How your partner can pray for you specifically

Closing Thought

"God is speaking to us far more than we realize. The question isn't whether He's talking—it's whether we're positioned to hear Him above the noise of our pain, our circumstances, and our culture."

For Next Week

Read Job chapters 15-21 (Job's friends respond and Job replies)

Reflect on this question: How do I typically respond when someone else is suffering? Do I offer comfort or accusations?

Additional Resources

Book recommendation: *A Grace Disguised* by Jerry Sittser

Practice: Try the "Examen" prayer method (reviewing your day with God each evening)

Worship songs that shift focus: "Goodness of God," "Way Maker," "It Is Well"