

LIGHTHOUSE GROUP CURRICULUM

2 Corinthians 1:2-11

LEADER'S STUDY

Dependence:

Have you ever experienced adversity or suffering? How did you respond? Were you surprised by it? Did you question God? Did you think that you didn't deserve the circumstances that you were experiencing? Or possibly that you did? Did you try to fix the situation, were you crippled by despair or did you try to find distractions from your circumstance? How did you feel? What did you do?

As followers of Christ, we belong to a King who has conquered everything including sin and death. He is sovereign Lord over everything and everyone. Even the ocean answers to His voice. He is a King of absolute power, and at the same time He is a merciful loving Father and the God of all comfort. As we discover who God is through scripture it becomes clear that nothing is out of His reach, and no one is beyond His grace. He cares so deeply and intimately for His children that He died for us. He did what we could never do. He experienced ultimate suffering for us so that we would not suffer separation from Him. He suffered so that we would have comfort. Comfort that can only come from depending on Him. There is no suffering we can experience that He does not know and there is no circumstance that is beyond His control. There is a saying that gets passed around a lot that sounds something like this; "God will never give you more than you can handle" but this is contrary to what scripture says. In fact, Paul describes being crushed and overwhelmed beyond his ability to endure. When he reached the end of his ability to endure, he says "we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely on God, who raises the dead". Suffering led Paul to depend on Jesus. God comforted him in his troubles so that he could comfort others with the same comfort that is found in dependence. Our King can be trusted, and we were actually created to depend on Him. What would it look like to depend on Him today?

As you read and prepare for this week ask yourself; How do I typically respond to suffering or adversity? What has God done for me? How is He calling me to depend on Him today? Are there ways that I resist depending on God? What do I turn to when I face trouble? How does suffering change my heart towards other people? Who do I know that needs to hear this good news? How is God revealing Himself and his character through this scripture? How is God changing my thinking? How do I view others, and myself, differently because of the gospel? Be willing to share areas that He is calling you to "follow Him" and make clear "I" statements about how you are going to align with Him.

Some helpful scripture: Romans 8:31-39, Revelation 1:1-20, Heb 4:14-16, Psalm 40
What other places in scripture speak this same truth?

How is God calling you to think and to live differently? How does this change your perspective today? How is God calling you to respond based on this scripture? Spend some time reading this whole chapter and meditating on it as you prepare for your meeting. Be willing to share this with your group and invite them to join you in sharing how God is asking them to respond to His word.

PREPARING BEFORE GROUP

PURPOSE: Life transformation through the Holy Spirit. He uses scripture and prayer to renew our minds and transform our lives!

PRAY: Pray for the people in your groups by name. Spend time asking the Holy Spirit to help you lead well as you meditate on key passages and seek to know God's heart.

PLAN:

Spend some time thinking about who is in your group. Think about who they are, how they respond to scripture and where they might be in their spiritual growth. Part of helping people engage God's word thoughtfully is learning who they are. For example; If a large part of your group are new to following Christ or don't have a church background, it might be helpful to give more context around what you are reading. Be careful not to assume that everyone knows what you know. That difference in background can actually be a great asset to your group. Sometimes new believers will ask questions from a perspective that is refreshingly honest and unjaded by religion altogether. Growing in Christ is something that we do as a family and every member is being used by God to help each other grow.

INTENTIONAL BIBLE READING

READ 2 Corinthians 1:2-11

And meditate on it.

Read in the ESV or similar word-for-word translation.

Read it again in the NLT to get a thought-for-thought perspective. (The New Living Translation is particularly helpful with this passage)

Consider reading the whole chapter or even the whole letter before your meeting to help you understand the context.

Try to summarize the passage in your own words.

POTENTIAL STUDY QUESTIONS

These are just questions you might ask to help your group discussion. Don't feel like you need to answer all of these as a group

What is significant, surprising or confusing from these verses?

What seems to be the main point of these verses?

How does this portion of scripture point to Jesus and the gospel?

What did you discover or learn about God and His character from this passage?

Look at one or two key words and define them really clearly, then look at them in context with that definition. Does this change your understanding?

Why did God bring me to this scripture today?

What parts of this passage are challenging to your current way of thinking?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

How is God calling you to obey, based on this passage?

or

What is your "I will" statement?

(Encourage everyone to steer clear of "we" or "us" or "Christians" statements)

With whom are you going to share what you have learned?

(This is a critical part of growth that is often overlooked. If we can share it with someone else it means we really understand it, it cements it in our own minds, it makes us accountable to the truth and it blesses the one who hears it. Rom 10:17)

Based on this passage, what can we pray about and how should we pray?