

4 WEEKS

WEEKS BREAKS SUSPENSE





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different FAITH in TRIALS

week 1

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What is something “different” about you that people may not know?

Big Idea:

As Christians, we are strangers, aliens, sojourners in this world and God uses trials to build our faith.

Key Scriptures:

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Discussion:

1. Read 1 Peter 1:1. How can you identify as a foreigner, alien, stranger, or sojourner in this world?
2. Read 1 Peter 1:6-7. Why do you think God doesn't miraculously keep you from experiencing any trials?
3. Read Luke 22: 31-32. Think of a time when a trial revealed your faith. What kind of faith did it reveal: inherited faith, shallow faith, conditional faith, or genuine faith?
4. Read James 1:2-4. Have you experienced a trial that drew

you closer to God? What caused you to move closer to God instead of moving away from Him?

5. Have you ever experienced a trial that caused you to move away from God? What happened and what did you learn through that trial?
6. Read 1 Peter 1:8-9. What trial are you facing right now? How can you begin to trust God with it?

Wrapping It Up:

Pray: Heavenly Father, thank You for this group of friends. We ask You to grow in us a faith that can be trusted. Draw us closer to You, God. We give You our worries, and we commit to trust in You. Amen.

Memory Verse:

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4

keySCRIPTURES

1 Peter 1:1

"This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to God's chosen people who are living as foreigners (strangers, aliens, sojourners) in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

1 Peter 1:6-7

"So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine."

Luke 22:31-32

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

James 1:2-4

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete not lacking anything."

1 Peter 1:8-9

"You love [God] even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls."

different: VALUES

in an UNHOLY CULTURE

week 2

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What did you do in your childhood just to fit in?

Big Idea:

Living holy isn't the path to knowing Christ. Knowing Christ is the path to living Holy. We're not talking about behavior modification. We're talking about spiritual transformation.

Key Scriptures:

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Discussion:

Read the Scriptures then discuss the following:

1. Why do you think it's so easy to start looking like the rest of the world?
2. What are three areas you find yourself trying to fit in? Are those areas really that important from an eternal perspective?
3. What are the biggest ways that you're different from the

world? How have you had the courage to be different?

4. Describe a time when you put your happiness above God's call for holiness? What was the result?
5. How would you describe the most important ways God asks us to be different?
6. What's one way you know God is asking you to be different?
7. Commit to and share with someone (or in your group) at least one thing you're going to stop so you can live differently.

Wrapping It Up:

Being different isn't just subtraction—it's also addition. What good, godly things can you add to your week to reflect different values in an unholy culture? Commit to those this week.

Memory Verse:

"But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do, for it is written: 'Be holy because I am holy.'"

1 Peter 1:15-16

keySCRIPTURES

1 Peter 1:13-17

“Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.”

1 Peter 1:14 NLT

“So you must live as God’s obedient children. Don’t slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires.”

different:CALLING

in a DARK WORLD

week 3

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What is the darkest situation you've ever found yourself in the middle of?

Big Idea:

We have a different calling than the rest of the world- to be light in the darkness. An eternal call to Christ, a temporary call to an assignment, a daily call to a different standard.

Key Scriptures:

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Discussion:

1. Who is someone you think of when you think of what it means to be a Christian? What makes that person stand out in your mind?
2. Read 1 Peter 2:9-12. What message does your life, as-is, send to people around you? Be honest.
3. In what ways do you struggle to see yourself as God sees you- a royal priest, a holy nation, God's precious possession? What do you think it looks like to live into that calling?
4. Read 1 Peter 2:15. What struggles do you face with living an honorable life?

5. Read 1 Peter 2:21-24. Often, we are hesitant to live out our calling out of fear of being different. In what ways can that fear be overcome?
6. 1 Peter 3:9. How ridiculous does this sound when you consider our current lack of civility in our culture? How difficult is this to live out?
7. How might you live in a way that not tells, but shows people God's goodness?
8. What can you do differently to lead more people to Jesus?

Wrapping It Up:

God, You've given us an incredible identity. We are chosen by You to be holy, part of Your royal family of priests. You called us to be good and to do good. So, we're asking You to give us the opportunities and the bravery to live out our callings this week. Amen

Memory Verse:

"...for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light."

1 Peter 2:9 NLT

keySCRIPTURES

1 Peter 2:9

"...for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light."

1 Peter 2:11-12

"Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world."

1 Peter 2:15

"It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you."

1 Peter 2:21-24

"For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps. He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. He did not retaliate when he was insulted, not threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right."

1 Peter 3:9

"Don't repay evil for evil. Don't retaliate with insults when people insult you. Instead, pay them back with a blessing. That is what God has called you to do, and he will grant you his blessing."

different PERSPECTIVE in PERSECUTION

week 4

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Have you ever been persecuted for something you believe or a way in which you've chosen to live?

Big Idea:

When we pursue comfort and avoid opposition, our faith weakens. When we live boldly and face opposition our faith strengthens.

Key Scriptures:

Page 11

Discussion:

1. Would you characterize your life as seeking comfort or living boldly? Explain.
2. Have you experienced any level of persecution for your faith? Is there anything you wish you did differently when that happened?
3. Read John 15:18,20. "Don't worry when you're persecuted for your faith, worry when you're not." How does this statement make you feel?
4. What would change about your life if you began to

expect persecution as a part of following Christ?

5. Read 1 Peter 4:12-13, 19 and 5:10-11. What benefit might there be in suffering according to these verses? How can that be an encouragement to you or to someone you know who is currently suffering?
6. "When we avoid suffering – either ours or that of others – we are really avoiding the cross." Discuss this statement.
7. Read 1 Peter 5:5-7. What are you worried about right now? How can you live out this Scripture and give your worries to God?

Wrapping It Up:

Pray together as a group to have the courage to live boldly rather than being seekers of comfort and to be able to embrace persecution and suffering as opportunities for your faith to be strengthened.

Memory Verse:

"So if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created you, for he will never fail you." 1 Peter 4:19

keySCRIPTURES

John 15:18, 20

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ... If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also."

1 Peter 4:12-13

"Dear friends, don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—for these trials make you partners with Christ in his suffering, so that you will have the wonderful joy of seeing his glory when it is revealed to all the world."

1 Peter 4:19

"So if you are suffering in a manner that pleases God, keep on doing what is right, and trust your lives to the God who created you, for he will never fail you."

1 Peter 5:10-11

"So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. All power to him forever! Amen."

1 Peter 5:5-7

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.... So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you."

NOTES

NOTES

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
 - Take time to prepare.
 - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
 - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
 - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
 - What is the purpose of our group?
 - What is the vision for our group?
 - What are your expectations?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
 - What are some things we value as a group?
 - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
 - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
 - Encouraging and challenging one another
 - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

Group Agreement

OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: _____

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes _____
 - Childcare _____
 - When we will meet (day of week) _____
 - Where we will meet (place) _____
 - We will begin at (time) _____ and end at _____
 - We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
 - Our primary worship service time will be _____
 - Date of this agreement _____
 - Date we will review this agreement again _____
 - Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study _____
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