

# Sermon Discussion Guide

## Trusting God through Trouble

Buddy Owens

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*“We live by faith, not by sight.” 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV)*

Trusting God is easy when life is going our way. That trust, however, becomes difficult when we experience trouble. In the storms, (the boat rocking and the bailing out) God is always with us. He is not waiting for us on the other side of the storm. If we think with the mind of Christ during our difficulties, he will fill us with hope. Let’s talk over how God is working on our behalf when the storm is blowing and all may seem lost.

**OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.**

*The Lord has his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.* Nahum 1:3

1. Trust is allowing God to be in control, without fearing the outcome. How does Nahum 1:3 explain how God works through what seems to you as a terrifying trial or circumstance that has entered your life?

*“We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day . . . we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:16-18*

How does 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 tell us how to deal with these situations on a daily basis? What practical steps can be taken to make this a reality in the way we respond to extreme difficulties?

*“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (NIV)*

2. As you reflect on this verse which part relates to your life? Do you find yourself on the troubled side by yourself or the trusting side with God?

*“We live by faith, not by sight.” 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV)*

Do you view your troubles as being temporary or long-lasting? What is your approach to overcome the troubled episodes in your life? How are you relying on God to be in control or relying on yourself?

*“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you.” Ephesians 1:18 (NIV)*

3. How can feeding on the word and praying for the rain of the Holy Spirit build hope when the situation feels hopeless? If group members feel comfortable, ask them to talk about a time in their life when they have gone through something very difficult. How did Bible reading and the presence of the Holy Spirit bring hope?

*“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9 (NIV)*

4. What practices or relationships can help those experiencing difficulties surrender more to the Holy Spirit’s help and guidance? How can pulling the weeds – changing attitudes and worries – help a person prepare for a harvest? Why is guarding against bugs (removing bad habits, destructive behaviors, poor choices, unhealthy relationships) so difficult? Once the harvest is reaped, list ways a person can now comfort another who is experiencing trouble.

### Diving Deeper (optional)

1. What worries are weighing on you today? List them by name and ask God to bring you comfort and to remind you that He is trustworthy and faithful.
2. Identify an attribute of God that is most important to you when your faith is being challenged. Why is that? How does that attribute help you trust God?



REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.

## Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

### Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- Which friend or family member do you trust the most? Why?
- **Goal:** To learn how to trust God when our faith is put through a test because of the squalls we encounter in life.
- **Prayer:** *Jesus, we pray for sustenance, vitality and growth when storms hit us hard. Please lift our eyes from the problems swirling around us to your face, your love, your grace. Be near during the tempests of life. Help us to put our faith in you by laying down our agenda for yours. Use our troubles to make us stronger, to listen to your voice and be brave enough to obey it even in our doubts. We want our adversity to bring forth your beauty. Amen.*

### Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

### Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.