



# Sermon Discussion Guide

## How We're Getting Through How to Get Through What You Go Through - Introduction

Rick and Kay Warren

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*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others with the same comfort that we've received from God.*

2 Corinthians 1:3

When what you've hoped for most is taken from you, how do you find hope again? We get through what we go through based on what we know—so it's critical to know God and his Word. 2 Corinthians 1 reminds us there are three things we can know: 1) Life doesn't make sense, but we can have peace because we know God is with us and he loves us; 2) everything on earth is broken, but we can have joy because we know God is good and has a greater plan; 3) life is a battle, but we can have hope because we know there's more to the story. Let's Talk It Over and do battle with hopelessness.

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

*I will never leave you and I will never abandon you.* Hebrews 13:5

*When you go through deep waters, I will be with you! When you pass through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned up; it will not consume you!* Isaiah 43:2

1. When we are in pain, it is natural for us to start looking for a reason. We think that having the explanation will remove our anguish. But the truth is, pain is not soothed by knowing “why.” Pain is relieved by knowing God loves you and is with you. How did the presence of God comfort you and change you through a difficult time?
2. Read Hebrews 13:5 and Isaiah 43:2. When we are feeling overwhelmed, what truths in these scriptures help restore our hope? Why is knowing that God is with you essential in helping you recover from trauma or pain?

*The earth suffers for the sins of the people, for they have twisted the instructions of God, violated his laws, and broken his covenant. Therefore... the earth has broken down and has utterly collapsed. Everything is lost, abandoned, and confused.* Isaiah 24:5, 19

3. There is nothing perfect on this planet—our bodies, our relationships, our minds—but we can choose joy. Jesus declared to his disciples that while in this world you will have trouble, you can take heart because he has overcome the world (see John 16:33). Have you ever experienced a time when you needed to hold on to Jesus' words?

*We can have joy even in our troubles because we know that these troubles produce endurance. And endurance produces character, and character produces hope. And this hope will not disappoint us, because God has poured his love to fill our hearts.* Romans 5:3-5

4. Read Romans 5:3-5. What does Paul say is the end result of trouble? What has God given us as assurance? If you did not hear the entire message from Rick and Kay Warren, The Talk It Over team highly recommends you do so to hear Kay's full message on finding hope when hope seems lost. You can find it at: <http://saddleback.com/mc/Archives/>

### Diving Deeper (optional)

1. We can have hope knowing that while this world is broken, God has a greater plan. For an in-depth picture of our broken world and God's greater plan, take time this week to read Isaiah 24. Journal what God shows you.
2. What do we do when our hope dies? It's important to know that it's not the end of the world, it's just the end of a moment. One way to rebuild hope is to start a hope box. Fill it with verses that strengthen you and read them often. Another way is by creating a playlist of songs that remind you of God's power. Take a few moments and share what has helped you find hope again.

**REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.**



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## Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

### Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- Recall a time in childhood when someone comforted you. What happened and how did it make you feel?
- Recognize that when all hope seems to be gone, God is still with us, he has a greater plan, and the story isn’t over.
- 2 Corinthians 1 assures us that our hope is firm because of what we know, and we know that as we share in suffering, we share God’s comfort. Think about someone you know who is suffering and make a plan to encourage them in a comforting way this week. Share your plan with your group and pray for one another to be hope builders.

### 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.