



Sermon Discussion Guide

When Your World Collapses How to Get Through What You Go Through – Part 1

Rick Warren
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“The enemy hunted me down; he kicked me and stomped me within an inch of my life. He put me in a black hole, buried me like a corpse in that dungeon. I sat there in despair; my spirit draining away, my heart heavy, like lead.”
Psalm 43:3-4 (Message)

What is our first reaction to a sudden loss, or devastating news? Shock, disbelief, feeling totally overwhelmed. The news can be financial, relational, health or the death of one we love. When you find yourself in these circumstances, cry out to God and let others help you. Relationships are what we need to help us get through these times. We cannot avoid what has happened. We must face it, but we don't have to face it alone. God hears our hearts cry and knows the pain we suffer. With God's help we can eventually turn our sorrow into someone else's hope. Here we'll also look at how to help a friend who is suffering from shocking news and how to increase our resistance to these shocks.

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

“By helping each other with your troubles, you truly obey the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2 (NCV)

1. Share a time when the ministry of presence made a positive difference in your life. Who in your small group needs the power of touch in their lives right now? Spend a few minutes mourning with them, then have one person pray for healing.

“Then they saw him from a distance...they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.” Job 2:12-13

2. Your small group is a fellowship of sharing, studying, serving and suffering. Discuss as a group how you can share each other's pain when a disaster occurs. Why do you think people who are suffering need tears more than words?

“Whenever you possibly can, do good to those who need it.” Proverbs 3:27 (NCV)

3. Why do you think it is so challenging for those who are in shock to ask for help? Who are the people in your life or possibly even in your small group, who need you to say, “I'd like to do this for you...” As individuals, take the initiative and perform an act of kindness during the week.

“Blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they go right on producing delicious fruit.”

Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NLT)

4. Share a time when God brought a specific Bible verse to mind when you were in crisis. Or when have you turned to the Bible for answers during a time of mourning? What can you do as a group to encourage each other to more confidently build a life based on God's Word?
5. How has your life improved when you focused on building strong spiritual roots? Have each individual in the group disclose how their daily quiet time has given them the strength and courage to turn crisis into hope.

Diving Deeper (optional)

1. When your world collapses and you cry out to God, why is it daunting to be totally open to God? Why is it sometimes difficult to be open with others about your pain? Having examined these perspectives, what will you change about yourself so you can be more compassionate to those who are suffering?
2. When you suffer devastating news, how do you normally react? Many of us withdraw, yet our greatest need is for fellowship. With what spirit do you accept another's offer to help you? How do you keep pride from getting in the way?

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

- Share briefly what you love most about your closest friend.
- Discuss how to help a friend in grave distress, survive a catastrophe in our own life, and increase our resistance to shock.
- Pray: Heavenly Father, help us to love one another in a deeper way. To stand together with our hurting friends, to hold fast to you when we are hurt, and grow closer together with those in our circle. Let us see with your eyes, hear with your ears and reach out with your heart to the hurting world around us. Show us how to love one another as Jesus Christ loved us. 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.