

SCRIPTURE CARD GUIDE FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

"IDENTITY AND STRENGTH IN JESUS" FEBRUARY 12 & 13

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Often in our anxiety, depression and mental illness these things are given "identity rights" to define us and say who we are. In doing so they try to own us. In reality, God's Word speaks a true reality over us. We are redeemed, loved and cherished children of God. Anxiety, depression, and mental illness do not define us. We may battle these, but they are not our identity.

*Follow the directions below for a guided group discussion with a friend, in a family, small group, etc.
Grab a Scripture Card (printed or electronic) and simply follow steps from 1 to 6 on this page and the next.*

1

OPENING PRAYER AND SCRIPTURE:

About 3 minutes

Ask a volunteer to open in prayer. Ask 6 additional volunteers to read a verse of Psalm 13 as part of the opening Scripture.

2

BIG IDEA:

About 1 minute to read

To hide our mental health pain only deepens our struggle and drives us deeper into despair. Our suffering is evidence of our desperate need for a Savior and the reality of the broken state of humanity. However, to be in a place of vulnerability and disclose our struggle, points us to the cross and declares that we are not alone, discarded, isolated or condemned. Rather, we are reconciled, received and renewed as the possession of Christ who is our strength.

3

INTRO QUESTION:

About 8 minutes

Do you pray for mental health for yourself and/or others, as often as you pray for physical health? Why or why not? How about your spiritual health?



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My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?
Why are you so far away when I groan for help?
- Psalm 22:1 NLT

Reflect

Read the full passage in your Bible - Psalm 22:1-11.

What word or phrase is the Holy Spirit highlighting from the scripture reading?

What might be God's invitation to you in this?

What might be God's challenge to you in this?

How might God be calling you to respond?
Be curious...and then do it.

DISCUSSION HELP:

Use follow-up questions to take the discussion deeper. Guide answers to be honest and real.

Can you say more about that?

How have you seen that play out in your life?

What does that stir up in you?

Has anyone else had a similar thought or experience?

What might God be inviting you to do?

4

SCRIPTURE READING + GROUP DISCUSSION

About 40-45 minutes

Psalm 22 is written by David, but is also prophetic as Jesus quotes it from the cross. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection we know that we are forgiven and that He will never leave us or forsake us. How do you rely on this promise when your emotions or circumstances might lead you to feel the opposite?

Most Psalms of lament include these 5 elements: an address to God, an account of the misery suffered, a plea for help, an affirmation of trust in God, and praise to God. In what ways are each of these elements important for us in the midst of our suffering?

What is helpful about praising God in the midst of suffering? What is challenging?

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. As you think of your own "thorn in the flesh" what is challenging and what is encouraging about this passage?

5 LIVE IT OUT:

About 3 minutes

Read this section aloud. Invite the group to take the steps suggested. Perhaps write down a few things you reflect on each day as you focus on God's faithfulness and love toward you.

Feel free to have the group share any additional Psalms or verses that have been helpful for them as they have gone through difficulties or suffering.

TAKE IT DEEPER



WORSHIP



GROW



SERVE



REACH

Live It Out

This week soak in the love and faithfulness of our God. Meditate on these scriptures throughout the week. Avoid a "to-do list" of trying to be better or do better. This only increases the burden on us. Instead, bask in the promises of God's faithfulness and love toward you. Let the Lord minister to you. Read and reflect on Psalm 22:1-11, Psalm 27, Psalm 100, John 14:1-6, Romans 8:31-39.

Pray

What honest—really honest—prayer (like David's in Psalm 22) do you need to speak to God today?

Talk to God about the times when he has felt distant or silent.

Thank God for his promises. Thank him for the times you have experienced his presence and his faithfulness, times when he has infused you with hope.

6

CLOSING GROUP PRAYER:

About 15 minutes

Read the prayer section on the card aloud, and take a few moments of silence for each person to reflect on the prayer prompt personally.

Share prayer requests in pairs. Pray using the Scripture Card prompts.

The leader may close the group time with the prayer below:

"Dear God, help us in the times when you feel distant. Let us to rest in Your unfailing love, to recall all the ways You have been faithful, and to rely on your promises remembering that You are close to the brokenhearted and strong when we are weak. Lord Jesus give us Your strength and peace for each of our days. Amen."