

WHEN LIFE DOESN'T MAKE SENSE

STORIES BEHIND THE PSALMS

TRIALS / ANXIETY
/ SHAME / BETRAYAL
/ ANGER / DOUBT

WHEN LIFE
DOESN'T

WHEN LIFE DOESN'T MAKE SENSE

GUIDES TO GROUP DISCUSSIONS

SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Trials, unfulfilled hopes, broken relationships, grief, and confusion about God's plans. Life often does not make sense. One of the reasons people resonate with the Psalms is because many of them are unchlorinated and describe how we feel when life does not make sense. Phrases like "How long, Lord, will this last?" and "Do not hide from my plea for help" and "Have I been pure for nothing?" capture how we sometimes feel. Many of those Psalms are connected to stories in the Scripture, stories that help us better understand the famous Psalms. Hear the Psalmists' stories, be inspired by their songs, and learn that God's grace is for you, especially when life does not make sense.

Remember that you aren't in this alone! God will help you prepare and lead your group discussion. Make it your goal to keep in step with the Holy Spirit!

Pray and read the passage a few times on your own. Take a few minutes to identify what makes an impression on you and how the passage might impact your group.

Once you've taken some time to read the passage on your own, read through the entire Discussion Guide. Make sure you understand the Main Point. Identify which questions you want to use in your group time and rewrite them in your own words.

Once your group time is over, take a few minutes to evaluate the discussion. What went well? What could have been different? If you had a "bad night," DON'T GIVE UP! Everyone has tough nights. There were times when even the disciples didn't get what Jesus was talking about!

**FREE
RESOURCES**

To equip you as a leader, we provide resources each series to help you and members of your group understand and respond to the biblical truths we're studying as a church. Don't forget about the Mariners Annual Read and the [Gospel Every Day podcast](#) discussing each devotional.

The CSB Study Bible is an excellent resource if you'd prefer a physical copy of the translation used by Mariners Church. It is available for purchase online and in the [bookstore](#) at Mariners Irvine.

All Scripture references in this guide are CSB unless otherwise noted.

HOW TO USE THE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

MAIN POINT

Discussions often take on a life of their own, but they typically lack power when they lack focus. The Discussion Leader ought to use the Main Point to keep everyone on the same page. To do this, you might say something like, "That is very interesting and a good topic for another discussion, but today's study is about..." and ask a question that brings people back to the topic of discussion. There will be times when it makes sense to ignore the Main Point—for example, when someone in your group experiences a significant crisis. If you decide to move away from the lesson's Main Point, you want to do so on purpose and not by accident.

RHYTHM REMINDERS

A prompt will be provided when one of the 7 Rhythms of Rooted has a natural point of emphasis. We want to help everyone continue to grow holistically in their spiritual journeys. Obviously, some rhythms always exist, like prayer, but occasionally it will be helpful to draw fresh attention to or spend additional time in one of the rhythms.

LEADER NOTES

Where needed, each lesson may have several Leader Notes. This material will provide insight on how to steer the conversation and care for your people. Additionally, these notes will provide greater context to help you understand a difficult word, phrase, or verse.

**LEAN IN
BREAK THE ICE**

These questions will help kick-start your discussion time. The main goal for this time is to get everyone talking and prepare them for the more focused conversation to follow.

**LOOK DOWN
LOOK AT GOD'S
WORD**

The goal for this section is to let the passage speak for itself and stand on its own. This isn't easy! During this time, you will read the passage out loud (twice) and answer questions focused on the details of the biblical text.

**LOOK OUT
IDENTIFY THE
RELEVANCE OF GOD'S
WORD IN THE WORLD**

Jesus calls us to love others, just as He loved us. Based on your understanding of the text and how God is transforming your heart, how will you treat others? How will you apply this teaching to all of your relationships and to everyone you will see this week and beyond?

**LOOK IN
APPLY GOD'S WORD**

Transformation comes from renewing your mind (Romans 12:2). The goal for this section is to look inward to allow God's Word to change you from the inside out. Use this time to discuss how your thoughts and feelings are affirmed and/or challenged.

Be sure to close your time together in prayer. You can take requests from the group, invite others to lead, and bring God the needs that stood out to you in your group time.

WEEK 1: WHEN I AM IN A TRIAL

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

PREPARE

Listen and subscribe to the Mariners Life Group Leader Podcast.

If you missed the weekend message or want to review specific points, you can always watch, listen, and find bulletin notes online at marinerschurch.org/messages.

MAIN POINT

David was surrounded by people who wanted to kill him, hiding in a cave. The ones who were with him were known as those discontented and in debt. From the depths of the cave, he poured out his complaint to God but then confessed that God was his cave—his refuge. Where we run in a trial reveals what we rely on in a trial. David viewed God as his refuge and portion, and that is how a trial becomes a gift in the lives of those who know Him.

LEAN IN BREAK THE ICE

Where's one of your favorite places to escape when you need some peace and quiet—a room, a trail, a coffee shop?

LOOK DOWN LOOK AT GOD'S WORD

Read Psalm 142

A Cry of Distress

A *Maskil* of David. When he was in the cave. A prayer.

1 I cry aloud to the LORD; I plead aloud to the LORD for mercy.

2 I pour out my complaint before him; I reveal my trouble to him.

3 Although my spirit is weak within me, you know my way. Along this path I travel they have hidden a trap for me.

4 Look to the right and see: no one stands up for me; there is no refuge for me; no one cares about me.

5 I cry to you, LORD; I say, "You are my shelter, my portion in the land of the living."

6 Listen to my cry, for I am very weak. Rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me.

7 Free me from prison so that I can praise your name. The righteous will gather around me because you deal generously with me.

Read Psalm 142. What is David's chief complaint, and what does he say about the character of God?

David "cries" in verses 1, 5, and 6. Track what he cries for each time—does anything shift as the psalm moves?

What does David call the cave in verse 7? What reason does he give for wanting to be freed from it?

**LOOK OUT
IDENTIFY THE
RELEVANCE OF GOD'S
WORD IN THE WORLD**

David was hiding in a cave, but he called God his true shelter (v. 5). When life stops making sense, our culture offers plenty of substitute shelters—relationships, career, money, escape, entertainment. Which of these do you see people running to most, and why do they ultimately crumble?

Studies consistently show that today's kids, teens, and young adults report the highest levels of loneliness of any generation—many would echo "no one stands up for me" (v. 4). Where do you see this in the young people around you, and what role could the Church play in being the ones who stand up for them?

**LOOK IN
APPLY GOD'S WORD
TO YOUR LIFE**

Where you run in a trial reveals what you rely on. When trouble hits, where do you tend to run first—and what would it look like to bring your trial to God before anywhere else?

David prayed, "The righteous will gather around me" (v. 7). Who is one person—maybe a young person in our church—you could gather around this season? Would you consider being that person for the next generation by serving with Kids or Youth, or serving our young adult community at Thursday Nights at Mariners?