

QUESTIONS *for* VIRTUAL SMALL GROUPS

ASKING FOR A FRIEND WEEK #1

APRIL 18/19

ICE BREAKERS

1. We are now several weeks into this new rhythm of our lives during Covid 19. What has been the hardest thing about this new rhythm? What has been a highlight?
2. It's almost gardening season (for those who do)! What is your favorite vegetable to eat, and how do you like it prepared?

LAUNCH QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been afraid to ask a question? What was it that caused you so much fear?
2. Often time we hesitate to ask questions because it is a topic that seems to be "taboo." What are some topics that seem to be taboo to discuss? (i.e. politics, religion, anxiety/depression)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What questions have you avoided asking because someone might wonder about the strength of your faith or belief? Explain.
2. Of all the causes of anxiety, which one has had the biggest effect on you? Are there times when one is more prevalent than another? (Causes: Threat, Conflict, Fear, Unmet Needs, Physiology, Individual differences.
3. Do you believe that God is your personal shepherd? If so, in what ways does he personally shepherd you? If not, why not?

4. Pastor Paul emphasized seven key points as he unpacked Psalm 23. Have your group choose a couple of these areas to discuss.

Rest – What does rest look like to you? Are you living in a posture of rest or of busyness? Explain.

Healing – What needs to be healed in your soul? A belief about God or yourself, a past wound, a past sin, a painful relationship, or something else?

Guidance – Describe a time when you received guidance from God. How did you know it was his voice? Where do you need guidance now?

Courage – Paul spoke of four words that can shift our perspective about how to handle the terror of our distress. Which of these four thoughts can help you begin to think of difficulty in a new way?

- *Distress is a shadow – no real destruction unless you yield to it*
- *Distress is a valley – Valleys are also fertile and full of life. Your current valley may be necessary for the life on the other side.*
- *Distress is but a walk – Let God lead you on this journey, and you won't be lost*
- *Distress goes THROUGH the valley – There is another side to pain.*

Comfort – In what tangible ways can we experience comfort from God?

Provision – Verse 5 shows how God provides a table of provision in two ways: supplying your needs and anointing with oil.

- *How has God provided specifically in your need during this time?*
- *How has he anointed you to help others out of your overflow in this season?*

Pastor Paul read this quote: “I shall be supplied with whatever I need; and, if I have not everything I desire, I may concluded it is either not fit for me or not good for me, or I shall have it in due time.” What are your initial reactions to this quote? How do you differentiate between your needs and your wants?

Blessing – Sometimes it does not appear that goodness and mercy are following me or other believers that I know. How do we make sense of that and trust that these promises are true?

PRAYER PROMPTS

1. If you have never tried the technique of praying scripture, PRAY Psalm 23 together allowing each group member to take a couple of verses. As you pray, let the words become personal and add your name or the name of someone else into the spaces where God brings someone to mind. Or add some detail that God speaks to you about your verse. Praying scripture allows you to bring the words of the bible alive to the situations and people in your world and to intercede with the thoughts and words of God. If you want to look more into how to pray scripture, check out *Praying the Bible* by Donald S. Whitney.

Example: Praying V 1-2 for a prodigal son. "Lord would you be Danny's shepherd and break into the places where he does not believe that you are a personal, intimate God. Lord show him what it feels like to rest from his ever-present anxiety and breathe in the peace that you offer. Lead him to a place of stillness, where the noise of his life quiets down, and he can hear your voice whispering to him and inviting him to the living water, the only water that will bring the rest that his soul cries for."

2. Anxiety can be a stronghold for many. If there are any in your group willing to share that they are struggling with anxiety, spend extended time praying for the breaking of that stronghold.

SENDING CHALLENGE:

1. Psalm 23 is not merely a passage about comfort in trials, but a call to action. It is a call to be these things to others in our lives. Choose one of the seven concepts that Pastor Paul unpacked this week and become a living example of that word to someone else. Be ready to share next week!
2. Each day this week, dig a bit deeper into each of the seven concepts that Paul gave us. Use the concordance in your Bible (or Google) to find other passages that speak to each of these. Ask God to speak something fresh to you about each one! His word is alive...believe he will!