

## COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR GROUP

### TEXT MESSAGES

*SEND THIS TO EVERYONE IN YOUR GROUP:* Hi! Just wanted to let you know that I'm asking God to help give you His perspective as you're walking through tough stuff this week. Take heart—He is working for good!

*SEND THIS TO ANYONE WHO MISSED GROUP THIS WEEK:* Hey—we missed you at group! Here's the link to the audio so you can catch up. Hope all is well and can't wait to see you next week!

*SEND THIS TO ONE OR TWO PEOPLE IN YOUR GROUP, JUST BECAUSE:* Hey! Just touching base. How has your week been? Will I see you at small group next week?

### EMAIL:

Hey everyone! Hope you all are having a great week! I wanted to send out a quick email to let everyone know what we'll be talking in life group this week. We're in week one of "The Story of My Life." This week's message is about the purpose of difficult times and how God not only helps us endure hardships, but He also makes us better because of them. We'll spend time talking about different circumstances we've all experienced and how God uses each and every circumstance to grow our faith. I'm really looking forward to our time together. Here are the details for our meeting: Date/time: Address: Our weekly Bible Reading Plan and the questions for this week are attached. See you guys soon!

## BIBLE READING PLAN

*If you're looking for a more personal way to encourage your group members to read Scripture, try texting each day's Scripture and prompt to the group. Or, EMAIL THEM out each week. That way they have each day's reading as the week begins.*

MONDAY (Day 1) Philippians 4:11-12

What do you think is the secret to being content in any and all circumstances?

TUESDAY (Day 2) Philippians 4:13, NLT

Paul's source of contentment was knowing that he could handle any circumstance with Jesus. Do you think the same is true for you? Are there any circumstances in your life that you think you can't handle? What would it look like for you to trust in God's strength in those circumstances?

WEDNESDAY (Day 3) James 1:12

Going through a trial? Know this: God sees you, and when these temporary circumstances have passed, He'll crown you with a crown of life—and it will never be taken away.

THURSDAY (Day 4) Psalm 27:1

Do you feel like you rest and trust in God? Ask Him to teach you to rest in His great power as the stronghold of your life.

FRIDAY (Day 5) Isaiah 41:13

God is offering His hand to walk you through any circumstances you face. How can you accept His help?

## SUMMARY

We live in an amazing world of technology. When you think about it, our phones, computers, tablets and nearly every app we can download have the same purpose –to make life easier. And we can all agree on one thing: easy is good. If there's a way to make life simpler, smoother, or less complicated, we're on board. And, because we believe that easy is good, our brains also draw the natural conclusion that not easy is not good. In a lot of ways, that logic can save us hurt. But it's not always true, is it? We've had experiences that were both difficult and good—like getting a job or raising a child. The other problem with our “easy is good” mantra is that it can often give us a distorted view of God. It can be tempting to assume that if we experience something not easy then it must be not good. And, if God allowed us to experience it, then maybe He is not good. But what if we've got it all wrong? What if difficult and good aren't enemies? What if God can take something not easy and use it for our good? As we'll discuss this week, Jesus' closest followers experienced difficulties and discovered that the path to a better life story is rarely easy, but it's always worth it.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*These questions are a guide to get the conversation started in your group—don't feel like you need to ask everything you see here! As long as you're having a conversation, you're on the right track. Also, feel free to adjust the questions to address the needs of your specific group.*

- WHAT PIECE OF TECHNOLOGY DO YOU HAVE THAT DOES THE MOST TO MAKE YOUR LIFE CONVENIENT AND EASY?
- GIVE SOME EXAMPLES OF THINGS THAT ARE BOTH DIFFICULT AND GOOD.
- WHAT IS THE VALUE OF GOING THROUGH DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES? GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF SOMETHING THAT WAS HARD BUT MADE YOU BETTER.
- WHAT MAKES UP A PERSON'S CHARACTER? WHAT DO YOU WISH PEOPLE WOULD SAY WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER?
- HOW HAS GOD USED A CHALLENGE TO MAKE YOUR LIFE STORY BETTER?
- .WHAT ARE SOME WAYS WE CAN SHOW GRATITUDE IN THE MIDDLE OF DIFFICULT THINGS? (SAYING “THANK YOU” OUT LOUD, BEING KIND TO DIFFICULT PEOPLE, ETC.)
- WHAT'S ONE CHALLENGE YOU'RE FACING THAT WE CAN PRAY ABOUT OR ENCOURAGE YOU THROUGH THIS WEEK?

## CONSIDER THIS - LIFEGROUP APPLICATION

*Read this before your group meets. Then, take a moment after your discussion to go over this application with your Life Group. How does this relate to your Life Group? Is it something you are already doing? If so, how can you do it better? If not, what steps can your group take to make this application happen?*

One of the greatest things for anyone in a life group to hear is, “me too.” The power in those two words cannot be understated when someone is sharing a doubt or a hardship. The whole point of life group is to share experiences and ensure that no one is alone in whatever it is they’re going through. You may have never had the same experiences as your group members, but chances are you’ve felt similar emotions, wrestled with similar tensions, and asked similar questions of God. Focus on what you do have in common and chances are, you’ll find a “me too” moment. Do your best to relate to the hardships that the others are sharing and encourage others to do so as well. You don’t need to have the answers to all the doubts and questions your group members may bring. Sometimes saying “me too” to a doubt or an experience will do more to build trust than any other answer. Within community there will be shared experiences. Do your best to encourage those experiences and facilitate the growth of relationships through “me too” moments. This week, try to relate to what your members are sharing and let them know that no matter what they’re thinking or feeling, you’re with them. And more importantly—so is God.

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## WRAPPING UP

### PRAY

Praying for one another is an essential part in growing in community and in our faith. Take some time at the end of each session to allow your group to offer any prayer requests they may have. Then, allow someone to lead the group in prayer. One person may do the entire prayer or you may have someone open the prayer, allow for others to pray and then someone to close.

### MAKE PLANS TO MEET AGAIN

Remind everyone that you will be meeting again next week. If you need to make plans regarding location or meals, now is a great time to do that. This way, you can include the info in your reminder email.

# *The Story Of My Life*

WEEK 1 - TAKE IT EASY  
LEADERS GUIDE

## LEADER NOTES