



The God We Wish We Knew Week Three

Opening Prayer

God, help us to be honest with another today and to experience you in real ways.

Talk It Over

In times of trouble, what is your general response? Do you find yourself getting depressed, angry, panicking, denying the problems, controlling, or do you have a different response?

Read Psalm 46:1 (New International Version) and Isaiah 40:27-31 (New Living Translation)

This week's talk was all about the fact that the God we wish we knew is a refuge. He is a safe place we can run to in times of trouble. God desires to be our strength and ever-present help in times of trouble. He is not distant in the struggles, he has not forgotten us, and he is deeply interested in helping us.

- When troubles come sometimes we might feel like God is making bad things happen to us, letting bad things happen to us, or totally unaware of what is happening in our life. Have you ever found yourself thinking or feeling in any of these ways? What triggered and lead to this sort of processing? Where are you at in the process now? Regardless of where you on your journey, your thoughts are welcome.
- Have you ever seen someone model what it looks like to have God as a refuge? Tell about that person and experience.
- Have you ever experienced a season where God felt like a refuge to you? Share about that experience.
- In what ways might you experience more confidence in life if you consistently and deeply believed that God could be your refuge and your ever-present help in times of trouble?

Read 2 Timothy 1:7

Faith is having confidence in the fact that God keeps his promises and nothing can stop the promises of God. When life feels turbulent, faith tells us to keep our focus on God and to not let fear get the best of us. To be clear: Faith doesn't tell us to ignore, minimize, deny, or cover up the bad. Nor does faith tell us to ignore, minimize, deny, or cover up our fear. But rather, faith invites us to us to fully acknowledge the bad and fear we see while holding tight to the promises that tells us God is bigger and mightier than the bad and fear.

Read through this set of questions as a group and then silently sit for a few minutes considering the questions privately. Invite God into your processing and be open to what he may have to tell you:

- Looking at your current life and the current struggles you are facing, in what ways does fear sometimes get the best of you?
- Looking at your current life and the current struggles you are facing, in what specific ways can you stop contributing to fear in your life? In what specific ways can you feed your faith despite the fear?

After a few quiet minutes have passed, discuss both questions out loud as a group. **(Continued on next page.)**

Read John 16:33 (New International Version)

The Bible tells us we can have peace in all situations because peace is found in Jesus. By remaining connected to God and immersing ourselves in his character, love, and promises we can lean into God's perfect peace despite the struggle, storm, and difficulty we are facing.

- Have you ever been able to experience some level of peace because of God despite the struggle, storm, and difficulty you are facing? Share about that experience. If you cannot speak from personal experience, what do you think it would look like to experience peace in the midst of a struggle, storm, and difficulty you are facing?

Read Romans 8:24-25 (Voice)

The word "hope" in Bible does not mean "wishful thinking". "Christian hope" is about putting our trust in the promises of God. "Christian hope" is a confidence that something good will happen because God promised it will happen. Real hope is about waiting expectantly in a posture of eager anticipation. Real hope opens us up to the good that will come and pushes us towards a promised future. It helps get us through tough times because we know something better is coming and this present moment isn't how the story ends.

- Have you ever met someone who was good at "Christian hope" or real hope? What about someone who had more of a "wishful thinking" hope? Share about your observations, takeaways, and learnings.
- In what area of life do you need more hope right now? In what area of life are you waiting expectantly in a posture of eager anticipation?

Closing Prayer:

God, you know where we are in life right now — you know the good, the bad, and the ugly. Help us to find you in the mess. Help us to experience you as our refuge and present help. Help us to live in faith, to encounter your peace, and to place our hope in you. God, we want to be transformed and consumed by your love.