

# LIFE GROUPS

**LEADER PAGE | Ascent | WEEK 4 of 15 | Sermon date:** August 28, 2022

**Discipleship Phrase:** “How do we prepare to go to church?”

**Big Idea for Series:** “Take your time with the people of God to receive from God.”

**Abiding** *(grow as a disciple yourself)*

Prior to meeting for group this week, take an honest look at your thought life. What is the main thing(s) that consume you? What is it that is getting the most attention from your conscience? Once identified, it's likely safe to say that's your focus. Upon further reflection, is it worldly or just something rooted on sinking sand? Psalm 18:2 says, “The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.” Those are some powerful words. What might you be allowing to take the place of the Lord to be all these things for you right now?

**Leading** *(facilitate your group effectively)*

As you prepare for this week, spend time praying over Lamentations 3:7-33. Jeremiah is using these verses to show how being of this world is lonely, heavy, and without hope when we lose focus on Jesus. Make note of the contrasts revealed through this scripture. It is easy to become fixated on the things this world has to offer, both good and bad. His word reminds us that we are a called and chosen people who he deeply loves and through Him our hope lives. Be ready to walk through what the stark variances are in your life when you look to, rely, and focus on the world around you. Share vulnerably the places you struggle to maintain focus and how your life changes when you can keep Him at the center and put away the “things” of this world.

**Shepherding** *(know, feed, lead, and protect the sheep)*

After your group meets this week, reflect. Who needs your encouragement, prayer, and support? During group discussion your members will reveal where they put their focus and attention. Many times, that focus becomes a distraction from what God intends for us. Our scripture passage, Lamentations 3, is a clear reminder of God's faithfulness and never-ending love for us. Center one-on-one conversations around the importance of trusting God's character, His timing, and His discipline in our lives. Encourage members to have a heart of gratitude to the Lord and thankfulness for what He is doing.

**Church Announcements** *(specific to group leaders)*

- Women's Ministry Fall Kick-Off is Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, from 6:30 to 8:30 in room 251, led by Brit Vinduska our Spiritual Development Pastor.
- Volunteer Appreciation Event is Sunday September 11<sup>th</sup>, from 5 – 9 pm in the worship center to show our deep appreciation and gratitude for our amazing volunteers!

**REMEMBER:**

**“Every group deserves a great leader.”**

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**Welcome/Introductions & Opening Prayer** (5 minutes)

**Ice Breaker, God Moments, or Highs & Lows** (*choose what fits best-5 minutes*)

**Weekly Vision** (*Announcements, The “Why”, Goal, Outreach, Guidelines, & Branching- 5 minutes*)

*Guidelines: Confidentiality, Avoid Crosstalk, Avoid fixing & Rescuing, Use “I” Statements, Contribute over Consume, Be Mindful of Self (allow all to share & use humor responsibly).*

**Ask a Hook Question** (*a thought-provoking question- 5 minutes*)

What guilty pleasure do you most enjoy? (i.e., eating ice cream for dinner, drinking out of the milk carton, binge watching a tv show)

**Recap the Message** (*ask a couple people to share- 5 minutes*)

**Scripture References** (*Read scriptures directly from the Bible*)

Lamentations 3:7-33

**Implications** (*takeaways from the message*)

1. Where we place our focus says a lot about how we weather the brokenness of the world.
2. It is easy to feel unseen when we try to live life outside of community. Coming back to relationships helps remind us we are not alone.
3. At the end of the day, many of the things we focus on just don't matter.
4. God loves us so much that He strips away all competing distractions so that we can become everything that He has intended us to be.

**Discussion Questions** (*going beyond the surface-55 minutes*)

1. Read Lamentations 3:7-33. How would describe what the world is showing to the author Jeremiah and what do you see as his response?
2. Take note of the differences between verses 7-18 and 19-33. What worldly aspects of this life are preventing you from receiving His peace? How does your life look/feel different when you are keeping Him at the center?
3. What intentional steps can you take this next week to walk in the freedom only He offers when we lose our worldly focus?

**Closing Prayer** (*ask openly for a volunteer-10 minutes*)