

Facilitator's Guide

Pressure Points

PRACTICAL FAITH FOR FACING LIFE'S CHALLENGES



BEACON HILL PRESS
OF KANSAS CITY

Pressure Points

PRACTICAL FAITH FOR FACING LIFE'S CHALLENGES

Writer/Editor

Mike L. Wonch

Director of Editorial

Bonnie Perry

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means - for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

The internet addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers in this book are accurate at the time of publication. They are provided as a resource. Beacon Hill Press does not endorse them or vouch for their content or permanence.

Copyright © 2016 by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City

Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City

PO Box 419527

Kansas City, MO 64109

nph.com

ISBN: 978-0-8341-3535-2

Printed in the

United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Using This Facilitator's Guide	4
Session 1: Grief/Loss	6
Session 2: Stress Management	12
Session 3: Family Relationships	18
Session 4: Loneliness	24
Session 5: Finances	30
Session 6: Healthy Self-image	36
Session 7: Vocation/Calling	42

SESSION

I

GRIEF/LOSS

Focus Scriptures: John 11:17-27; 33-35

Session Goal: To help group members understand the depths of grief and how God is present in the midst of our pain.

OPENING OUR MINDS

Option 1

Ask participants who have experienced the death of a loved one to share their responses to these three questions:

- **At the time of your loss, who said the most comforting words to you? Who made the most thoughtful gesture?**
- **What did he/she do and say that impressed you so much?**
- **Has this person suffered a similar bereavement in his or her own life?**

Summarize by saying, "Often, the most meaningful help comes from those who have been there before us."

Option 2

Invite your adults to reflect on an instance in which they received helpful words of advice, encouragement, comfort, or inspiration. Ask:

- **How important was it to you that the person had experienced a situation similar to yours?**
- **Would you have equally valued the words of a person who had never experienced something similar to your situation?**

The darkness of mourning can be a confusing time. Today, we will talk about the ways we can deal with loss in a healthy way.

Imaginative Option

Write the following words on a dry erase board. Go down the list and invite group members to share the ways each can be experienced as painful loss.

Broken relationships

Lost employment

Failing health

Financial ruin

Emotional breakdowns

Damaged reputations

Betrayal

Missed opportunities

OPENING THE WORD

Understanding John 11:17-27; 33-35

Jesus was in a town called Bethany when He received the news His friend Lazarus was dying. Jesus proclaimed Lazarus' illness would not end in death, but would result in God being glorified. Rather than immediately going to Lazarus, Jesus stayed two more days. During this time He shared with the disciples that His friend Lazarus would fall asleep, but Jesus would awaken him. Jesus explained that He did not mean that Lazarus would be woken up from slumber, but that he would die and Jesus would raise him from the dead.

When Jesus arrived Lazarus had died and his sisters, Mary and Martha, meet Jesus. Their greeting was less than enthusiastic. "If you had only been here our brother would not have died," they exclaim (v. 21). Their complaint also showed their faith. Their frustration was founded on their belief of who Jesus was and what He could do. They had faith that Jesus could have healed their brother had He arrived earlier. Jesus assures them that their brother will "rise again" (v.23), and proclaims He is the "resurrection and the life" (v. 25). That is, we can gain eternal life through Jesus.

Later in verses 33-35, Mary and others were weeping because of Lazarus' death. Jesus wept too. This shows Jesus' connection with human suffering.

Option 1

Read verses 17-27.

- **How do you think Mary and Martha were feeling before Jesus arrived? How do you think they felt when they first saw Jesus?**
- **What do their words reveal about their understanding of Jesus?**

- **What was Jesus proclaiming about himself in verses 25-26?**
- **How does Martha's statement in verse 27 reveal her faith in Jesus?**

Read verses 33-35.

- **How do you think Mary and Martha were feeling at this point in the story?**
- **Why do you think Jesus wept? What does this reveal about Jesus?**

Option 2

Divide everyone into three groups. Assign each group to read John 11:17-27; 33-35. Give each group a 3x5 index card with the following questions below. Invite the groups to read the passage and discuss the questions.

- **What is going on in this story?**
- **Who are the main characters of this story?**
- **What stands out to you?**

Allow sufficient time for groups to discuss. Then, bring the groups back together. Invite each group to share their discussion. Follow up by asking,

- **What is the overall message, or messages, of this story?**
- **What does this story reveal about Jesus?**

OPENING OUR HEARTS

Option 1

There are many ways to deal with grief in a healthy way. Share the following with the group.

- *Seek out friends and family.* Rely on the comfort and strength of those closest to you.
- *Seek out a support group.* Finding a group of others who have experienced what you have experienced is beneficial.

- *Seek out a professional counselor.* If you feel like your grief and loss is giving you more than you can handle, then finding a counselor who can aid you in working through those emotions and equip you with ways to work through the issues you are facing maybe needed.
- *Seek out your faith community.* Those in the body of Christ can be a great spiritual support.
- *Seek God.* This is first and foremost. God will give you the peace, strength, and guidance to help you during the difficulties you are going through with grief and loss.

Close in prayer.

Option 2

Read the following statements and ask the group to silently reflect on which of these they identify with the most.

- *"Why is this happening to me?"*
- *"I can't fix it . . . I just can't."*
- *"Where is God in all this?"*
- *"I don't understand it all, but I know God does. I place my faith and trust in Him."*

Share with the group that although they may feel alone, God is with them. As the group quiets their hearts before God, read the following stanza from the hymn, "Abide with Me."

Abide with me; fast falls the even tide. The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide. When other helpers fail and comforts flee, Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Close in prayer, asking for God's presence to be made real in each person's life.

Imaginative Option

Consider playing Laura Story's *Blessings* as a way to close your time together. As the song plays, invite your group to silently speak to God.

Connect

WEEK 1

Grief/Loss

THIS WEEK: We will discuss the depths of grief and how God is present in the midst of our pain.

THINK ABOUT THIS: In what ways have you dealt with grief and loss in the past?

PRAYER CONCERNS:

Other Dialog studies also available!

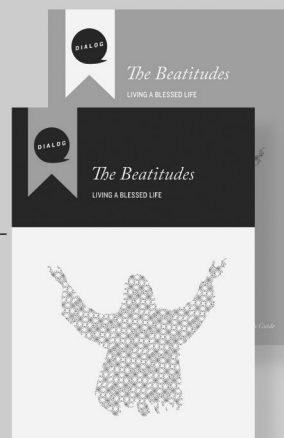
THE BEATITUDES

Living a Blessed Life

Discover why those who live as described in the Beatitudes are likely to find themselves both at odds with, and misunderstood by, cultures built on radically different assumptions.

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE ISBN 978-0-8341-3374-7

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE ISBN 978-0-8341-3373-0



THE PROPHETS

Hearing the Timeless Voice of God

The prophets live during specific times and speak specific words to their listeners. Yet, because their messages are from God, their words are timeless. Learn about seven of these prophets, who they are, and the messages they deliver that transcend time to grow your spirit today.

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE ISBN 978-0-8341-3376-1

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE ISBN 978-0-8341-3375-4



Available online at DialogSeries.com