



# FACING HARDSHIPS

## Family Devotional/Adult & Teen Discussion Guide

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JULY 23, 2017

**1. PRIMARY STATEMENT:** When grief, poverty, stress, or other hardships press down on us, the pain can overshadow our identity. The truth is, God has created each of us with a unique identity and purpose; something no season of hardship can delete.

## 2. BIBLE VERSE

### Genesis 17:1-5 [GNT]

*"When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, 'I am the Almighty God. Obey me and always do what is right. I will make my covenant with you and give you many descendants.' Abram bowed down with his face touching the ground, and God said, 'I make this covenant with you: I promise that you will be the ancestor of many nations. Your name will no longer be Abram, but Abraham (which means, 'father of many nations'), because I am making you the ancestor of many nations.'"*



God spoke over Abram's life and identity before his situation changed. He had a purpose for Abram's life that infertility couldn't overcome. It was a hardship, but it wasn't his identity.

## 3. APPLICATION

### Matthew 16:17-18 [ESV]

*"Jesus replied, 'You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you... Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.'"*

Jesus spoke over Peter's life and affirmed his purpose, even knowing Peter would deny him 3 times. Even a hardship of Peter's own actions couldn't change God's purpose and plan.

Q. Have you ever experienced a hardship that redefined your life? Do you think that situation shipwrecked God's purpose for your life?

Q. God saw leadership in Peter, even knowing he would falter. When you miss the mark, does it change your identity in Christ?

Does it change God's purpose for you?

Q. Think of someone in your life who has been redefined by hardship. What would you say to them about their identity and purpose? Do you think God feels the same way about you?



## 4. PRAYER FOCUS

Take a few minutes as a family and thank God for giving you an identity and purpose. Ask Him to strengthen that sense of identity through seasons of hardship and to be a help to others walking through difficult seasons.



# LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

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## 1. POWER VERSE: "I Will Love And Pray For My Enemies!"

**Luke 6:27** "...love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you."

This week we continue our series "Say What?" by talking about something very important, love.

Love is easy when it comes to people we like; our friends, our family, BUT it can be quite difficult when it comes to our enemies. Jesus commanded us to love the people who hurt us. We need to pray for them, even when it isn't easy! We must learn to love our enemies!

## 2. DISCUSSION

Read: Acts 9:1-20

Q. Who was the man Jesus sent to Saul to lay hands on him? Do you think he was scared?

Q. What if he hadn't obeyed God and gone because he saw Saul as his "enemy"?



Q. Do you believe God changed Saul's heart? How does that change who he was and how other's should see him?

God changed Saul. He went from being an enemy to being a follower of Jesus! Paul was no longer anyone's enemy because

Jesus had changed him and his heart. Jesus changed us, He changed Paul, and God can change others too!

## 3. APPLICATION

Identifying Our Enemies:



Q. Do you feel like you have any enemies in your life?

Q. Who are they? (It's okay, have courage to name the people that you struggle with.)

There may be people who pick on you or who hurt your feelings.)

Q. How can we love our enemies and follow God's plan for our lives like Ananias did? (We can pray for them, show kindness, etc.)



## 4. PRAYER FOCUS

Spend time praying together as a family for the people in your lives who may be enemies. Pray God will help you love them with Christ's love and show compassion to them!