



BETTER TOGETHER

Family Devotional/Adult & Teen Discussion Guide

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SEPTEMBER 24, 2017

1. PRIMARY STATEMENT: *We live in a culture where people are becoming more and more isolated. From online shopping to text messages, technology is slowly chipping away at the social interactions in our lives, and leaving us vulnerable to the strategies of our spiritual enemy. The life God has planned for us is one that's lived together in community.*

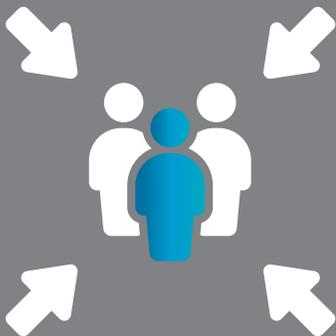
2. BIBLE VERSE

Isolation leaves you weak.

Ecclesiastes 4:1 [NLT] *“Again, I observed all the oppression that takes place under the sun. I saw the tears of the oppressed, with no one to comfort them. The oppressors have great power, and their victims are helpless.”*

Q. Have you ever felt alone, even around people?

Q. Think of the time(s) in your life when you felt the most isolated. How close to God did you feel in that time? How fulfilled or unsatisfied did you feel?



3. DISCUSSION

Strength and purpose is found in sharing life with each other.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 [NLT] *“A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.”*

When we work together, we've got each others' backs. We can be an encouragement when someone else is down, a word of caution when someone else is straying off God's path - and they can be that for us. When we pour into someone else's life, we can find the purpose and value in our own.

Q. How connected do you feel to others today?
How about in the church?

Q. If you're more isolated than you want / should be, what steps can you take this week to help change the situation?



4. PRAYER FOCUS

Take a few minutes as a family and thank God for the people that He's put in your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you to start and invest in relationships that will help you and others live stronger, God-pleasing lives.



SUFFERING

Family Devotional/Overflow Kids Discussion Guide

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SEPTEMBER 24, 2017

1. POWER VERSE: **John 16:33** *"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."*

"No Matter What Happens – Jesus Gives Me Peace!"

In our brand new series, "Soul Food", we will find out the key ingredients for a healthy Christian life. This week, we learn that suffering is one of those ingredients. Too many people have the idea that once you become a Christian, everything is going to go smoothly and you will never have a tough time in life. But that is not what Jesus taught us. Suffering isn't only a "possibility" - Jesus said it is a guarantee. Bad things will happen to us even as we follow Him. Suffering is part of the deal.

2. BIBLE READING:

Read: Acts 6:8-7:54

Q. What did Stephen do that didn't sit well with the other religious leaders?

Q. What were they afraid would happen if Stephen continued?

Q. What did the religious leaders do to ruin Stephen's reputation? What did they do when that didn't stop Stephen from sharing about Jesus?

Q. What did Stephen look to Heaven and say right before he died?

3. DISCUSSION:

Life is full of troubles and difficulties. Each day, we will be in a fight against our enemy, the devil. But Jesus has already defeated the devil, so we do not have to be afraid or worried. Although life is full of "many trials and sorrows," we can have peace in our hearts and minds because Jesus has "overcome the world." If we trust Him and never give up, we will win the victory!

Q. What are some ways that you might suffer for your faith today?

Q. How should you prepare yourself for the suffering you know will eventually happen as a follower of Jesus?



4. PRAYER FOCUS

Pray that your children will not be afraid or discouraged when suffering comes their way. Pray that they will stand firm in their faith in Jesus. Pray that they will take heart, knowing that He has overcome the world!