

Trusting When God Seems Absent



WEEK ONE

MON 11/8

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Isaiah 55:8-9
- ✓ THOUGHT God's ways are higher. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'" [NIV] It is a comfort that our minds can't comprehend all that God is. God is greater than we can think or imagine, thank goodness!
- ✓ PRAYER God, when I am struggling to understand, help me to remember your goodness. Deepen my faith and trust. Amen.

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TUES 11/9

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Proverbs 3:5-6
- ✓ THOUGHT Depend on God. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take." [NLT] Our understanding is limited! If we depend solely on our understanding, we might miss out on some big things God is capable of doing in our lives. During times of uncertainty, we must lean in and seek God with all our hearts and be open to the new and unexpected.
- ✓ PRAYER Mighty God, I give you praise and thanks for the ways you bring newness to my life. Help me stay open to change, trusting that you will lead me through it. Amen.

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WED 11/10

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Isaiah 40:31
- ✓ THOUGHT We must have hope! "...but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." [NIV] Today, spend a few moments thinking of the things that cause you frustration. Name them and ask God to replace your sense of frustration with the hope that only he can provide.
- ✓ PRAYER Loving God, I want to experience more hope in my life. Help me not to dwell on the things that seem wrong, but, instead, to hold on to hope in how you are working in my life. Amen.

NOTES: _____

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WEEK ONE

THURS 11/11

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Hebrews 11:1
- ✓ THOUGHT We can't always see. "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." [NIV] Our faith is crucial when we are feeling distant from God. We can be confident God is always there, even when things in our life make it more difficult to feel connected. Faith encourages us to keep seeking with an assurance that God loves us deeply.
- ✓ PRAYER God, help me to remember that the ups and downs of this faith journey do not change who you are. Thank you for your never-changing love for me. Amen.

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FRI 11/12

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Romans 8:38-39
- ✓ THOUGHT God is always there. "I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created." [CEB] Be glad! Nothing we do or fail to do can separate us from the love of God. Nothing! God is always there, ready to receive us.
- ✓ PRAYER Loving God, it is hard to believe sometimes that your love transcends my weakness. Help me to come closer, to seek you even more when I am discouraged. I pray that you would instill in me the assurance of your ever-present love. Amen.

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SAT 11/13

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Hebrews 11:6
- ✓ THOUGHT Faith pleases God. "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." [NIV] What can you do today to earnestly seek God? Perhaps some extra prayer time or time spent with another believer would lead you down that path.
- ✓ PRAYER God, I want to be someone who seeks you with my whole heart. Help me to be mindful of the ways I can do that daily and to prioritize my spiritual growth. Amen.

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GROUP GUIDE

- ✓ **PRAYER** **God, we acknowledge that you are already here. May our hearts be open to your presence and direction. Amen.**

- ✓ **BIG IDEA** **Our human nature is to try and predict and control how our lives will go, and when we can't understand the ways of God, we are sometimes prone to forget that God is always with us, even when it might not feel that way.**

- ✓ **READ** **1 Samuel Chapter 4**

- ✓ **DISCUSS**
 - Despite their corruption and disobedience, The Israelites try to coerce God's favor by bringing the Ark with them into battle. Have you ever found yourself trying to talk God into something you knew probably wasn't what was best for you?
 - Sometimes we think that if we can follow enough rules and avoid the "big sins" then God will have to reward us with our desired circumstances. Do you think that one's circumstances are, generally, tied to one's behavior?
 - Think of a time when your circumstances have been difficult. How did that experience influence your relationship with God? Did it change your trust level?
 - Discuss your views on the purpose of prayer. How does your prayer time change when you are feeling close to God, as opposed to the times you are feeling distant from God?
 - When God seems absent in your life, what is your go-to response? Do you experience apathy, anger, or anxiety, or do you practice faith, patience, & hope? Share some practical ways you could nurture your faith during challenging times.

- ✓ **Pray** **God, it is so difficult to walk through challenging times when it feels like we are alone. We know that you are good and you never leave us. Help us to remember to put our faith into practice when unexpected times of trouble come our way. Amen.**