



Dangers, Toils, and Snares

STUDY GUIDE

**TRUTH
FORLIFE®**

THIS STUDY GUIDE

contains fourteen sessions that explore some of what the Bible teaches concerning suffering, hardship, and trials. You will get the most out of this study by intently reading or listening to the sermons from Alistair Begg's series *Dangers, Toils, and Snares*. The content for each session accompanies a particular sermon Alistair preached. Using selected Scriptures from both the Old and New Testaments, you will develop a biblical framework for thinking about suffering's presence and purpose in the world.



FIND ALL 14 MESSAGES AT
[TFL.ORG/DANGERS.](https://www.truthforlife.org/dangers)

Dangers, Toils, and Snares: Study Guide
Copyright © 2023 by Truth For Life
PO Box 398000 Cleveland, Ohio 44139

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of Truth For Life.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



What are the purposes of suffering and trials? Why does God allow them? Those around us might tell us that suffering is pointless, that we should ignore it or rise above it, or perhaps even that karma is paying us back for a wrong we have committed. The Bible, though, gives a very different answer. Scripture clearly addresses suffering—both its presence and its purpose. (After all, no one suffered more than Christ, our Savior.) Its many examples of faithful men and women who encountered various trials demonstrate God’s hand at work throughout history and for His glory.

In this series, Alistair Begg address the difficulties and worries of life by turning our attention to God’s Word and promises. We may be tempted to long for greener pastures, but the Bible assures us that “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” (Phil 4:7), can be found in Jesus Christ, even amidst great worldly trials.

Each session includes four parts:

- 1) Getting Started:** a brief summary statement or commentary on the sermon, followed by an introductory question
- 2) Key Scriptures:** important Bible verses that were referenced in the sermon and are flagged for further meditation and memorization
- 3) Going Deeper:** questions to help you process the main ideas of the sermon
- 4) Giving Praise:** a hymn that can be committed to memory, incorporated in worship, and used as the basis for prayer about what you have learned and considered



SESSION ONE

“Dealing with Stress” | Selected Scriptures

Getting Started

Stress is all around us, permeating the very personal realms of family, geography, and industry. Where do we go when we're stressed? To what or to whom should we turn? As it relates to stress, we would do well to learn from Jesus Christ, the only individual who ever lived a life that wasn't tainted by sinful stress.

What was the last thing that caused you noticeable stress? Why did it affect you in that way?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

JOHN 14:27

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

PHIL. 4:4-7

Going Deeper

1. Alistair points out that the absence of settled values, stable hopes, and established beliefs factors into the stress epidemic. How does the *presence* of these things bring peace?

2. What are some flawed, insufficient ways in which you tend to deal with stress?

3. How do your Christian beliefs in particular work to alleviate stress and bring peace? Which doctrines are comforting to you?

4. According to Isaiah 57:20 and Matthew 11:28–30, what causes us to be stressed?

5. Meditate on Philippians 4:4-7. What truths from this passage can you hide in your heart for when you become stressed or anxious?

6. What was Paul's context for writing Philippians, and how does this deepen our understanding of his encouragement to "not be anxious about anything" (4:6)?

7. Is it possible to have true, lasting peace without Christ? Why or why not?

GIVING PRAISE

When peace, like a river,
Attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot,
Thou hast taught me to say,
"It is well, it is well with my soul."

"IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL"
BY HORATIO G. SPAFFORD

SESSION TWO

“All the Lonely People” | Mark 10:46–52

Getting Started

Loneliness is capable of hurling the heaviest weights onto our lives. In our workplaces, churches, and even in our homes, we’re surrounded by lonely people. Thankfully, our God cares for the lonely. Who better to empathize with us than our Lord, who in Mark 15:34 cries out from the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

What are some reasons you or others you know experience loneliness? Why do you suppose it’s so widespread?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

LUKE 19:10

“In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

2 CORINTHIANS 4:4

Going Deeper

1. What do Luke 19:1-10 and John 4:1-29 teach us about God's concern for lonely people?

2. Bartimaeus is a picture of what it means to be without Christ: we are blind, and we are beggars. In what sense is this true, theologically speaking? (See, for instance, 2 Cor. 4:4.)

3. What seemed to be going on in the hearts of those who rebuked the blind beggar? How was their response contrary to God's heart for sinners and sufferers?

4. Bartimaeus's actions show us that true faith never doubts our need and is not too proud to cry for mercy. What brought you to Christ, and how did He meet you with mercy?

5. In what ways have you been more like the crowd than Christ in this account? Make note of them below, repenting (if you haven't already done so) and asking the Lord to soften your heart.

6. Why do you suppose Jesus, fully knowing Bartimaeus's need, still asked him to acknowledge it (Mark 10:51)?

7. What can we learn from the immediacy with which Bartimaeus responded to Christ's call (Mark 10:49-50)? How does this help us understand the call of discipleship? (See Mark 1:16-20.)

GIVING PRAISE

I hear Thy welcome voice
That called me, Lord, to Thee
For cleansing in the precious blood
That flowed on Calvary.

"I HEAR THY WELCOME VOICE"

BY LEWIS HARTSOUGH

SESSION THREE

“Casting All Your Cares” | 1 Peter 5:7

Getting Started

Anxiety is a strange thing, often presenting itself in the most unusual of circumstances and at times when we least expect it. Scripture remains a sure guide for those dealing with anxiety, because irrespective of time, the causes of worry in the human heart are the same.

What produces worry and anxiety in your heart?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”

1 PETER 5:6-7

“In the LORD I take refuge; how can you say to my soul, ‘Flee like a bird to your mountain, for behold, the wicked bend the bow; they have fitted their arrow to the string to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart.’”

PSALM 11:1-2

Going Deeper

1. Look up and review the following verses from 1 Peter: 1:1, 6; 2:20-21; 4:12-19; and 5:10. What do these passages reveal about what was going on in the lives of Peter's first-century audience?

2. Alistair notes that the word for “anxieties” in 1 Peter 5:7 has a root meaning of “to divide” or “to distract.” How does this help you understand the nature and inner workings of anxiety?

3. Rather than deny them or escape them, Peter calls his readers to “cast” their anxieties onto Christ (1 Peter 5:7). How is this different from other coping mechanisms?

4. What does it mean to cast our anxieties on the Lord? How can you do so?

5. How has God shown His care for you this week?

6. In what sense is verse 6 connected to, and not disengaged from, the command of verse 7?

7. In a world of pagan deities, the phrase “He cares for you” was revolutionary. Reflect upon this truth—that the God of the world cares for *you*—and write a few thoughts or praises below.

GIVING PRAISE

Cast thy burden on the Lord;
Only lean upon His Word;
Thou wilt soon have cause to bless
His eternal faithfulness.

“CAST THY BURDEN UPON THE LORD”

BY ROWLAND HILL

SESSION FOUR

“Down in the Valley” | 1 Kings 19:1-18

Getting Started

In 1 Kings 19, we encounter Elijah *in the valley*—both figuratively and literally. In chapter 18, he shows his bravery before hundreds of false prophets on Mount Carmel. But in chapter 19, we find him panicking before Jezebel. In both Elijah’s bravery and frailty, we learn something of God’s character and how He deals with those in despair.

We can often learn as much from people’s triumphs as we can from their failures. Can you think of a few biblical examples?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.”
1 CORINTHIANS 10:12

“If we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.”
2 TIMOTHY 2:13

Going Deeper

1. What does 1 Kings 19:1-5 tell us about Elijah's predicament?

2. What actions did God take to refresh Elijah in his despondency (1 Kings 19:4-9)?

3. Alistair remarks that Elijah had fallen into the "self" trap, believing that he was the only one who was concerned about his circumstances. What is the danger in this kind of thinking?

4. Compare Elijah's actions with those of God's in 1 Kings 19:1-18. What are the differences?

5. What does this account teach us about God's character and nature, especially as it relates to His dealing with suffering saints?

6. God reinstated Elijah after his bout of spiritual despair (1 Kings 19:15). How is God's grace evident in this text?

GIVING PRAISE

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

“GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS”

BY THOMAS O. CHISHOLM

SESSION FIVE

“Jesus Calms the Storm” | Mark 4:35–41

Getting Started

Commenting on Jesus' rebuke of the sea in Mark 4:39, John Calvin says Christ rebuked it “not that the lake had any perception, but to show that the power of his voice reached the elements, which were devoid of feeling.”¹ Much more than an example of Christ's ability to calm the storms in our own lives, this account reveals the lordship of Jesus over all creation—which, rightly understood, is a source of great comfort for believers.

How has God used trials to deepen your faith in and understanding of Him?

KEY SCRIPTURE

“He awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’ And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”

MARK 4:39

“He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.”

ISAIAH 40:29

¹ John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, trans. William Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1845), 1:425–26.

Going Deeper

1. Mark 4:35-41 provides several details that intensify our sense of the disciples' predicament. What are they?

2. Jesus' word to the disciples in verse 35 was straightforward, though their obedience led them into a storm. What does this imply about the cost that so often accompanies our own obedience to Christ?

3. How does Isaiah 40:27 shed light on the disciples' question to Jesus in Mark 4:38? Was their questioning warranted?

4. What does Mark 4:39 reveal about the person and work of Christ?

5. Alistair reminds us that life's storms show us "that Jesus Christ is Lord of all, that He is the Ruler of all nature, and that He is the majestic King." How has your suffering allowed you to discover anew God's grandeur?

6. How does Genesis 1:3 relate to Mark 4:39?

7. The disciples' response to Jesus' power in verse 41 is instructive for us. How so?

GIVING PRAISE

Jesus knows all about our struggles;
He will guide till the day is done.
There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus—
No, not one! No, not one!

"NO, NOT ONE!"

BY JOHNSON OATMAN JR.

SESSION SIX

“Suffering in the Believer’s Life” | Lamentations 1:12

Getting Started

Human experience confirms the biblical truth that everyone suffers to some degree. Unique to the Christian worldview, however, is the promise that in the pain of suffering there is the presence of God.

What promises in Scripture encourage you when you experience suffering?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

1 PETER 1:6-7

“Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which was brought upon me, which the LORD inflicted on the day of his fierce anger.”

LAMENTATIONS 1:12

Going Deeper

1. Alistair identifies several pitfalls to avoid when addressing the issue of suffering: (1) engaging philosophy rather than theology, (2) adopting an overly simplistic approach, and (3) neglecting to empathize with sufferers. Which of these do you tend toward most?

2. How does the Christian perspective offer hope to sufferers?

3. Look up and review James 1:3, Hebrews 12:8–9, and Deuteronomy 13:3. What do these verses tell us about how God uses trials in the believer's life?

4. How does Lamentations 1:12 point forward to and find its fulfillment in Jesus?

5. Who in your life is enduring suffering today? What are some specific ways you could help them?

6. How does Deuteronomy 29:29 factor into your understanding of God's relationship to human suffering?

7. If a nonbelieving friend asked you why God allows suffering in the world, what would you say?

GIVING PRAISE

The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of heaven breaks;
The summer morn I've sighed for,
The fair, sweet morn awakes.
Dark, dark hath been the midnight,
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

"THE SANDS OF TIME ARE SINKING"

BY ANNE R. COUSIN

SESSION SEVEN

“If Anyone Is Sick...’ – Part One” | James 5:14–18

Getting Started

Prayer plays a crucial role in the Christian life, especially as it pertains to suffering. God’s design is that His people would come to Him in dependent prayer in all circumstances, whether in sickness or in health, in joy or in sorrow.

What prevents you from praying as frequently and fervently as you ought?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”

JAMES 5:14

“A Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.”

LUKE 10:33–34

Going Deeper

1. Alistair notes that the prevailing emphasis in James 5:13-18 is on prayer. What are some of the different dimensions of prayer that this passage highlights?

2. James assumes his readers will belong to a local church (5:14). What are the blessings of belonging to a church, and what are the perils of neglecting this crucial aspect of the faith?

3. Describe a time when the church has helped you through hardship.

4. Despite the interpretive challenges James 5:14-15 poses, the main point is clear enough: we ought to pray for those who are suffering. How might you make the ministry of prayer a routine part of your devotion to Christ and others?

5. What part does faith play in our prayers specifically and the Christian life more broadly? (See James 2:14-26.)

6. How should we understand James's instruction to anoint the sick with oil (5:14)?

7. Three groups are involved in James's teaching in 5:14: the church, the elders, and the sick. What are their roles, respectively?

GIVING PRAISE

My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine.

Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine!

"MY FAITH LOOKS UP TO THEE"

BY RAY PALMER

SESSION EIGHT

“If Anyone Is Sick...’ – Part Two” | James 5:15

Getting Started

Commenting on “the prayer of faith” in James 5:15, Douglas Moo writes, “This faith, while certainly including the notion of confidence in God’s ability to answer, also involves absolute confidence in the perfection of God’s will. ... Therefore, the ‘faith’ that is the indispensable condition for our prayers for healing to be answered—this faith being the gift of God—can be truly present only when it is God’s will to heal.”²

How does prayer strengthen your faith?

KEY SCRIPTURE

“The prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”

JAMES 5:15

“He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

² Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 182.

Going Deeper

1. How does knowing God's character help us trust His work?

2. How would you summarize what Paul says he learned in 2 Corinthians 12:6-10? How do these lessons help you make peace with God's will in your life?

3. How can we endure in faith even when God doesn't answer our prayers according to what we ask?

4. In what sense can sickness and suffering actually be means of grace to us?

5. Alistair reminds us to hold two truths together: on the one hand, God heals according to His sovereign will; on the other hand, prayer is involved in God's healing work. Do you tend to emphasize one of these truths more than the other? If so, how can you embrace a biblical balance of the two?

6. In your own words, what is James referring to when he uses the phrase “the prayer of faith” (5:15)?

7. What would it look like for you to come to the Lord with what Alistair calls “a humble boldness”?

GIVING PRAISE

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry
 Everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
 All because we do not carry
 Everything to God in prayer!

“WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS”

BY JOSEPH MEDLICOTT SCRIVEN

SESSION NINE

“Making the Most of It” | Genesis 39:1–7

Getting Started

God’s hand of blessing accompanied Joseph wherever he went, even when caravanned as a slave into the depths of pagan Egypt. As He did with Joseph, so God does with all who trust in His Son. Through Christ, God protects, prospers, and promotes His children for the sake of the Gospel.

Think about a recent time when God sustained you through hardship. What did you learn of His character through that experience?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD caused all that he did to succeed in his hands.”

GENESIS 39:2–3

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.”

EPHESIANS 4:31

Going Deeper

1. What details in Genesis 39:1-6 highlight the fact that God protected and prospered Joseph?

2. Like Joseph, we must rely on God to protect us from the subtle dangers of resentment, self-pity, and bitterness. How have these attitudes surfaced in your life? How are they contrary to God's purposes for His people?

3. Joseph's actions pointed others to God (v. 3). Which aspects of your life—whether work, family, recreation, etc.—serve as a Gospel witness? What aspects might detract from the Gospel?

4. How does the Gospel enable us to see God's blessing even in life's ordinary circumstances?

5. Joseph's life conveys a profound truth—namely, that we make more spiritual progress through failure and tears than through success and laughter. How has this proven true as you've walked with the Lord?

6. Look up and review Psalm 9:9; 27:5; 46:1; and 138:7. According to these verses, what role does God's presence play in protecting believers?

7. For what circumstances can you give thanks to God today, whether you're feeling bitter or blessed? List a few of them.

GIVING PRAISE

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

"AMAZING GRACE"

BY JOHN NEWTON

SESSION TEN

“Sweet Fruit from a Thorny Tree” | 2 Corinthians 1:1-7

Getting Started

Paul describes God as “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1:3). Using various insights from C. H. Spurgeon’s life and ministry, this session will outline the ways in which God uses our sickness, affliction, and suffering to grow us in grace.

How has God used suffering in your life to teach you lessons that you could not have learned in times of happiness?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

Going Deeper

1. Spurgeon describes the lessons learned in suffering as “sweet fruit from a thorny tree.” What does this imagery convey about the nature of suffering in the believer’s life?

2. What does 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 reveal about God’s character as it pertains to our enduring hardship?

3. Spurgeon observes that “pain teaches us our nothingness.” How has suffering helped reveal your weakness and, in turn, strengthened your dependence on the Lord?

4. “Sickness,” Alistair says, “forces us to cast all our cares upon the Lord.” Why do you suppose that sickness, rather than prosperity, better positions us to rely on Christ’s care?

5. How might God help others through the suffering you've experienced? Consider some examples from your past, and identify some people you could try to help.

6. How can we avoid the temptation to become bitter or resentful because of our hardships?

7. How has suffering made you more sympathetic toward others?

GIVING PRAISE

Sing, pray, and keep His ways unswerving,
So do thine own part faithfully,
And trust His Word; though undeserving,
Thou yet shalt find it true for thee:
God never yet forsook at need
The soul that trusted Him indeed.

“IF THOU BUT SUFFER GOD TO GUIDE THEE”

BY GEORG NEUMARK, TRANS. CATHERINE WINKWORTH

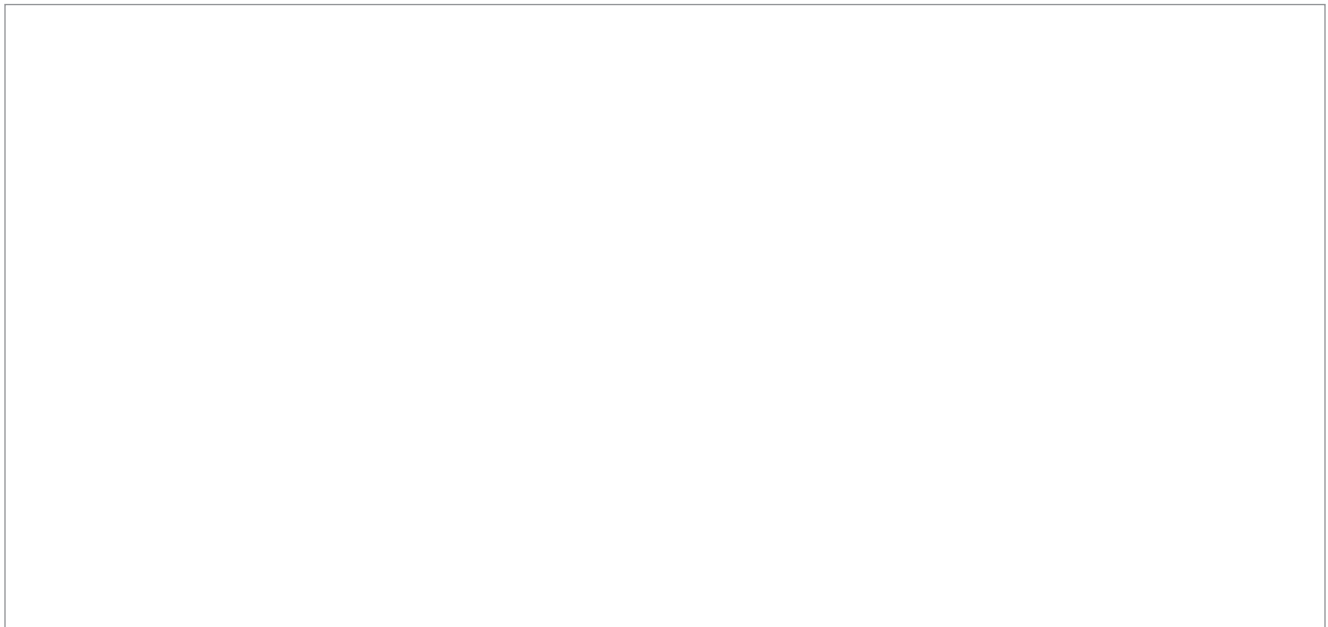
SESSION ELEVEN

“So Do Not Fear...” | Isaiah 41:10

Getting Started

The ancient world was fraught with idolatry—images of false gods overlaid with gold and silver who could neither help nor hear (Isa. 40:19). But the God of the Bible is not like that. He is present with us, offering His hand to strengthen us. The idols of the world topple, but the Lord upholds His people.

What idols are prevalent in today’s society? In your own life?



KEY SCRIPTURES

“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

ISAIAH 41:10

“We love because he first loved us.”

1 JOHN 4:19

Going Deeper

1. What is the context of Isaiah 41:10? (See verses 1-9 especially.) How does knowing this help us understand the promise in a more meaningful way?

2. Alistair says, “The heart of world history is grounded in the character and purpose of God.” Why is this good news?

3. How does God’s grace empower our obedience? What are the dangers of getting this order confused, putting obedience *before* grace in our lives?

4. What is the basis of God’s promise to help us in Isaiah 41:10? What does this reveal about how God works in our lives?

5. God promises to strengthen, help, and uphold His people (Isa. 41:10). How has He done this for you? (See also Isaiah 40:29.)

6. How does Isaiah 40:23-24 describe God's greatness? How can this passage be a source of comfort in a chaotic world?

7. Ephesians 2:12 describes those without God as also being "without hope." How does the Gospel offer a sure hope that transcends anything the world can provide?

GIVING PRAISE

God is my strong salvation;
What foe have I to fear?
In peril and temptation
My light, my help, is near.
Though hosts encamp around me,
Firm to the fight I stand;
What terror can confound me,
With God at my right hand?

"NO CAUSE FOR FEAR"

BY JAMES MONTGOMERY

SESSION TWELVE

“Why Has This Happened to Me?” | Ruth 1:1-22

Getting Started

God’s providence is a doctrine of great comfort for the Christian. His governing care extends not only to the major movements in world history but also to the intricate details of our lives. Whether we wish to admit it or not, the extent to which we trust the Lord is often revealed in our suffering.

Think about the events that have led up to where you are and who you’ve become today. Where would you locate God’s providence in those events?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, ‘Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel!’”

RUTH 4:13-14

“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.”

EPHESIANS 1:11

Going Deeper

1. Ruth 1:1-5 describe a life that is falling apart. What details point to this fact?

2. Alistair observes that even when our faith is stretched and tested, it remains faith. What is the difference between a fledgling faith and outright unbelief?

3. Why do you suppose Ruth remained with Naomi while Orpah left (Ruth 1:14)? What does this event reveal about God? About Ruth?

4. To what simple evidence can you look to remind yourself of God's goodness to you? (See Luke 12:24-28.)

5. How does Ruth's story remind us that God works His plans out through ordinary circumstances?

6. God's providential care can be seen in some of the earliest biblical accounts. What do we learn of providence in Genesis 22:9-14 and 45:5-8?

7. How can a Christian be simultaneously filled with sorrow yet express genuine faith in God's provision?

GIVING PRAISE

Through all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ.

**"THROUGH ALL THE CHANGING SCENES OF LIFE"
BY NAHUM TATE AND NICHOLAS BRADY**

SESSION THIRTEEN

“Celebrate Life!” | Ecclesiastes 11:1-10

Getting Started

Amid life’s many dangers, toils, and snares, it is important that we take time to reorient our hearts toward God and His Word. Ecclesiastes offers us wisdom for celebrating the lives God has given us, with practical guidance on how to do so.

Write down a few things for which you are grateful. How can you give God praise for those things?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth. Walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.”

ECCLESIASTES 11:9

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

ISAIAH 55:10-11

Going Deeper

1. Alistair points out that Ecclesiastes 11:1 is a call for God's people to be resourceful and generous. How are these things good for us?

2. Would you say your life is marked by generosity? How can you grow in this crucial discipline?

3. How does Ephesians 5:16 help make sense of Ecclesiastes 11:3-5? What threats does inactivity pose to the Christian life?

4. Alistair summarizes Ecclesiastes 11:7-10 in a short phrase: "Enjoy, be happy, relax." How can we glorify God even through these ordinary means?

5. Commenting on verse 9, Alistair describes God's judgment as factual, fair, and final. To what degree does the fact of God's future judgment impact your day-to-day living?

6. What does Ecclesiastes 11:1 teach us to expect when sharing the Gospel with others? How should this encourage us in our evangelism efforts? (See Isa. 55:11; Matt. 13:3-8.)

7. What are the benefits of carefully meditating on the doctrine of God's judgment?

GIVING PRAISE

I thank Thee more that all my joy
Is touched with pain,
That shadows fall on brightest hours,
That thorns remain,
So that earth's bliss may be my guide
And not my chain.

"MY GOD, I THANK THEE"
BY ADELAIDE A. PROCTER

SESSION FOURTEEN

“The Glory We Await” | Romans 8:18–25

Getting Started

Many of us suffer from too low a view of God. Coming to terms with the God of the Bible means acknowledging His vastness, goodness, and glory. Paul helps us with this in Romans 8, showing us how God’s redeeming purposes extend beyond individuals and to the entire created order.

Why do you think people today have a low view of God?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

ROMANS 8:18

“All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him?”

ISAIAH 40:17–18

Going Deeper

1. Romans 8:18–25 describes sin's effects on our relationships: with God, creation, and others. What are they?

2. How should Christians view suffering?

3. How does relating to God as Father (Rom. 8:15, 19) help us in our trials?

4. Alistair clarifies for us that the Christian's "groan" in verse 23 is an expression not of despair but of anticipation. What do we have to look forward to as God's children?

5. In what sense is hope (Rom. 8:24–25) a distinguishing mark of believers? How does Christian hope differ from that which the world offers?

6. What bearing does Genesis 3 have on our reading of Romans 8:18–25?

7. While we wait for our future glory to be revealed, what measures can we take to hold fast to Christ?

GIVING PRAISE

When the toils of life are over,
And we lay our armor down,
And we bid farewell to earth with all its cares,
We shall meet and greet our loved ones,
And our Christ we then shall crown,
In the new Jerusalem.

“IN THE NEW JERUSALEM”
BY CHARLES B. WIDMEYER

To see more studies from Truth For Life and
Alistair Begg, visit [**truthforlife.org/studyguides**](https://truthforlife.org/studyguides).

Provide your feedback about this study at
[**letters@truthforlife.org**](mailto:letters@truthforlife.org).