

# Small Group Study

## **ICE BREAKER:**

- ⇒ **How do you handle stressful situations or difficult conversations? Do you avoid them? Make sure you are in control? Give in to keep peace, no matter the cost? Keep busy and find a distraction so you don't have to deal with it?**
  
- ⇒ **When you were a kid, how did your parents respond when you were sad, angry, or hurt? "Suck it up!" "Stop crying or I'll give you something to cry about" "Grow up and act your age" "Real men... boys... or big girls don't cry."**
  
- ⇒ **Which ones have you repeated to your kids?**

**\*\*Leaders, make sure to leave plenty of time for BRINGING IT HOME.\*\***

## **REVIEW:**

Discuss the following quotes.

- **"WHEN OUR DESIRE FOR SELF IS GREATER THAN OUR TRUST IN GOD... GOD'S PLAN IS IGNORED."**
  
- **"WHEN OUR TRUST IN GOD IS GREATER THAN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES... ONLY THEN WILL WE REALIZE HOW GOOD GOD IS. "**

## **MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE**

### **READ MATTHEW 4:12-16**

- How does Isaiah describe the Messiah?
- When did you begin to see God clearly?
- Was it a light bulb moment—or did it happen gradually?

## **MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE... THROUGH COMFORT.**

- We've all heard the saying, "Sticks and stones can break my bones... but names will never hurt me." As a child... when was this not true for you? How did it make you feel? How did you respond? Did anyone stick up for you? Did anyone ask you how you felt?
- If so, did it change your perspective or attitude?
- Share a time when you felt accepted and understood. How did that change your perspective or attitude?

- Why do you think so many people followed Jesus? What drew them to Him?
- In what ways did Jesus make God visible? How did He help them see God in a new way?

### READ MATTHEW 28:16-20

- What was Jesus going to do after He spoke these words to His disciples? (**Ascend back to heaven**)
- What does Jesus instruct them to do?
- How do “making disciples” and “making the invisible visible” go hand in hand?

### READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-7

- How does Paul describe God? (**The source of all comfort**)
- How does that characteristic of God affect our lives? (**He offers us comfort whenever we need it. It’s up to us to accept it**)
- What are we supposed with the comfort we receive from God?

### READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:8-10

- On a scale of 1-10, where would you rate Paul’s level of emotional stress?
- Share a time when you felt like Paul? How did you deal with it? Where did you go for comfort?
- Other than God, what do people turn to for comfort? (**Drugs, alcohol, smoking, TV, hobbies, food, gambling, shopping, pornography, sports, relationships, etc**)
- Why do you think people turn to these rather than God?
- How do these behaviors relate to **“WHEN OUR DESIRE FOR SELF IS GREATER THAN OUR TRUST IN GOD... GOD’S PLAN IS IGNORED.”**
- According to Paul, there are 3 benefits of going through struggles. What are they?
  - (They teach us to rely on God) (v 9)
  - (They teach others to rely on God) (v 6-7)
  - (They build trust for the future) (v 10)
- Share a time when your faith grew as a result of going through a struggle.
- Share a time when your faith grew as a result of someone else going through one.

### BRINGING IT HOME.

- **We all go through valleys and need comfort. Are you currently entering the valley? ...Deep in the valley? ...Coming out of the valley? How can we help you?**
- **Who do you know who is in the valley and needs comfort? How will you respond?**
- **PRAYER TIME: Pray for requests, focusing on those w/emotional pain. Pray that the group would see those in need of God’s comfort... and help meet the need.**