



Book Club Week 1 | Levi Lusko | 07.06.2024
Weekly Study

S H A R E

As group members get settled, take a few minutes to check in with everyone and see how life is going. Share an exciting story from this week, your highs and lows, an answered prayer, or something you're struggling with. If someone is really struggling, rally the group around them and take a few moments to pray over them - especially important this week, as we dive into meeting God in our pain.

Practice gratitude and share one thing you're thankful for this week!

Where did you notice God's faithfulness in your life this week?

Do you have a funny story about how something you see everyday was more than what it seemed?

G R O W

Welcome to our annual summer series - Book Club! Kicking things off, Pastor Levi Lusko fearlessly dove into the topic of meeting God in our pain and taking a hard look at the lenses we use to process times of hardship and suffering. After some real-life examples of how what we see is hardly ever the whole picture, he encouraged us to rely on God's promises over our naked eye experiences. We then prepare for trials by surrendering our hearts to God to grow an eternal perspective for our lives. Often the most challenging part comes with letting God use our pain, as our human inclination is to numb or deny that we're in pain at all and isolate in the process. It's in these times that we need community the most, allowing Him to draw near to us and reveal a greater purpose for our pain - to heal both ourselves and the world around us.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

None of us are strangers to pain and suffering, and yet here we are today on the other side of some of the hardest things life has thrown at us. If you're willing to share, what is a trial that you've gone through that you would actually say you're thankful for because of the ways it grew your character and your trust in God?

God wastes nothing when it comes to our stories. Can you think of an instance when sharing a painful experience you once went through helped comfort or bring healing to a friend or loved one?

Pastor Levi beautifully explains how God designed lions to maximize the light that they receive and utilize it to their advantage. For us, *our Light* is the Light of the world. Jesus is our rock and our firm foundation - and it is through Him that we are to look at and process the painful experiences in our lives. Jesus once said, in this world you *will* face trouble. Suffering comes to find everyone. The loss of a loved one, the cancer diagnosis, the breakdown of a relationship - and over time, emotional pain accumulates in our soul. We carry our past into our present. All too often, our unhealed pain sabotages the spiritual growth we long to have. So when pain and suffering comes knocking on our door, what do we do? When we choose to use the lens of faith and press into God during these times, our pain can be the exact pathway God uses to give us our greatest breakthrough.

Read Romans 8:28; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7, Proverbs 10:25

We can respond to pain in all sorts of ways, but most commonly we tend to deny, disassociate, or numb - be it through drugs, our work-life balance, or social media. Taking an honest look at ourselves, what is the knee jerk reaction we lean towards when facing hardship?

What could it look like for you to reorient yourself to the pain in your life as an opportunity to be formed by God's loving relationship and grace?

M O V E

As the saying goes, the only way out is through - but let that not minimize the bravery and courage it takes to sit with God and process some of our deepest wounds. As Hebrews tells us,

Jesus is able to empathize with us in all of our temptations and sufferings. The prophet Isaiah spoke of Jesus as a man of sorrows, rejected and familiar with suffering. This week set aside time daily to bring your emotions before Him in prayer.

C.S. Lewis once said, "If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were precisely those who thought most about the next." In the midst of the pain you may currently find yourself in, what would it look like to press into community and service, allowing your pain to help you feel more deeply for those that are hurting around you and allow God's light to shine in the darkness?

In your prayer time this week, practice a flow of emotional awareness. After some deep breaths, *notice* the emotions you may be feeling. Next, *name* those emotions. Be as specific as possible. Putting words to how we're feeling is a crucial step. Be gentle with yourself and give yourself time to truly *feel* those emotions. Finally, offer those feelings to God and allow His Spirit to speak to you and comfort you. Can you find Scripture to echo what God says to you?

As a group, this is the perfect time to practice generosity in your community and be a light to those around you. Check out all of our Outreach opportunities at redrockschurch.com/loveourcity!

PRAY

The journey into emotional health involves learning to notice and name our emotions in the presence of God. When we notice and name an emotion, it begins to have less power over us. This is where speaking God's truth over our lives and situation leads to the true healing we need. Implement the emotional awareness practice above at least once this week and share how it went for you the next time your group gathers. Rest in the truth that we have a good Father who simply desires to sit with us, and draws near to us all the more when we allow Him to meet us where we're at.