

Small Group Leader's Guide

Series: The Struggle Is Real

Title: Part 1 – When Life Hits

Main Scripture: John 16:33

Additional Scripture: Psalm 34:19

Section 1: Welcome & Snacks (10 Minutes)

- Welcome group members as they arrive, create a warm atmosphere, and allow everyone to grab refreshments.

Section 2: Icebreaker (10 Minutes)

- What is a small, unexpected "storm" or disruption that threw off your schedule this past week?
- When life hits without warning, what is your default reaction—try to fix it immediately, isolate, or pause?

Section 3: Message Recap & Key Scriptures (10 Minutes)

Main Scriptures

- **John 16:33** – Jesus promises that in this world we will have trouble, but we can take heart because He has overcome the world.
- **Psalm 34:19** – The righteous face many troubles, but the Lord saves them from all of them.

Key Takeaways

- **Trouble Is Unscheduled, But Jesus Is Constant:** Nobody puts trouble on the calendar, but facing problems with Jesus is far better because He will never leave nor forsake you.
- **Trouble Does Not Mean Abandonment:** A difficult chapter does not mean God left your story—He is actively writing you into His.
- **Peace Before Circumstances Change:** You don't have to wait for everything to get good before you experience peace. Jesus offers peace while the storm is still going on.
- **Fighting From Victory:** Because of Jesus' work on the cross, we do not fight *for* victory; we fight *from* a position of victory.

Section 4: Discussion Questions (10 Minutes)

1. **Facing Trouble with Jesus:** The notes mention that nobody schedules trouble on their calendar, but facing it with Jesus makes all the difference. How have you seen this truth play out in your own life recently?
2. **Re-evaluating Conclusions:** When trouble hits, why is our first reaction often to assume God has abandoned us? How can we guard against drawing wrong conclusions during hard chapters?
3. **God "With Me" vs. God "For Me":** What is the difference between believing God is *with* you versus believing God is *for* everything you want?
4. **Experiencing Peace Early:** The notes challenge us to "get peace before it gets good." Why is waiting for circumstances to settle before finding peace a trap?
5. **Walking in Radical Peace:** Why does walking in supernatural peace during times of chaos look so unusual or "crazy" to the surrounding world?
6. **Naming the Struggle:** The notes suggest naming your trouble specifically and bringing it to God to work on. What makes it hard to yield specific problems entirely to Him?
7. **Trusting Unanswered Desires:** How do we maintain trust in God's faithfulness when His answer to our prayer isn't the exact answer we wanted?
8. **Fighting From Victory:** How does shifting your mindset from fighting *for* victory to fighting *from* the victory purchased on the cross change how you approach your daily struggles?

Section 5: Fellowship & Further Discussion (30 Minutes)

- Open the room for deeper conversation, allowing group members to unpack their responses to the questions, share personal experiences related to current struggles, and connect casually over refreshments.

Section 6: Prayer Time (Untimed)

- **Name & Lay Down Burdens:** Invite members to state their specific struggles out loud or in silence, bringing them directly to Jesus.
- **Pray for Immediate Peace:** Ask God for peace that surpasses understanding over unresolved situations so hearts can settle before circumstances change.
- **Declare Victory:** Thank Jesus for His ultimate victory on the cross and pray that His victory shapes everyone's perspective for the week ahead.