



4 Bible Discussions in Times of Crisis

“Where Can I Find Security?”

“How Can I Get Perspective?”

“How Can I Find Peace?”

“Where Can I Find Hope?”

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Discussion Guidelines

These short discussions from Q Place are designed to be facilitated rather than taught. Following these guidelines will help your discussions to be rich with discovery.

- This discussion is not for experts. If you are one, please resist the urge to let us know, and join the group in the joy of new discoveries.
- Let's discover for ourselves what the Bible says in informal discussion—no lectures allowed.
- You don't need to believe that the Bible is true, only that it is worth discussing.
- We all learn as we express our discoveries. Everyone's insights can sharpen other group members' understanding and increase participation and interest.
- It's stimulating to include people from different backgrounds so we can hear other ideas and learn together.
- Please keep our personal sharing confidential and respect differences of opinion. If there is a disagreement, rather than attempting to resolve it, let's just keep moving.
- If we meet again and someone new joins us, we will review these guidelines.
- Let's stick with the verses we're discussing, avoid tangents, and focus on what this section of the Bible is saying.

Bible Discussions in Times of Crisis

“Where Can I Find Security?”

Today's world is in a continual state of insecurity about its very existence. Environmental disasters, global diseases, economic turbulence, terrorist acts, political unrest, moral disintegration, fragmentation of families, and wars leave us feeling vulnerable.

This psalm (a sacred hymn or song) may be the most dearly loved chapter in the Bible. It is written by David, a major biblical figure who started out as a shepherd, taking care of his family's sheep, and ended up being Israel's king. In all kinds of challenging situations, people throughout history have found comfort in this psalm, and it speaks with amazing relevance today.

Icebreaker: How has the current crisis impacted you? What kinds of thoughts and feelings are stirred up in you?

Psalm 23

A psalm of David.

- ¹ The Lord is my shepherd;
I have all that I need.
- ² He lets me rest in green meadows;
he leads me beside peaceful streams.
- ³ He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths,
bringing honor to his name.
- ⁴ Even when I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will not be afraid,
for you are close beside me.
Your rod and your staff
protect and comfort me.
- ⁵ You prepare a feast for me
in the presence of my enemies.
You honor me by anointing my head with oil.
My cup overflows with blessings.
- ⁶ Surely your goodness and unfailing love will
pursue me all the days of my life,
and I will live in the house of the Lord
forever.

Read Psalm 23:1-4

1. Sheep are noted for their defenselessness and instability. Based on this, what do sheep need?
2. What relationship does David have with the Lord? Consider how David's experience as a shepherd would have led him to this analogy.
3. What four specific things does the Lord do for him?
4. What does each mean in terms of your needs?
5. Note the change from *he* to *you* in verse 4. To whom does David now speak directly, and what do you think this indicates?
6. What's happening to David in verse 4 and why does he still feel secure?
7. The rod was an instrument of discipline, the staff was an instrument of guidance and rescue for the sheep. In what ways have you experienced God's discipline, guidance, or rescue?

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Read Psalm 23:5-6

8. What picture is drawn here?

9. What aspects of life are suggested by the things which the Lord provides so abundantly?

10. What do you think enables David to speak with such confidence regarding his future?

11. How does it impact you to know that God's ***goodness and unfailing love will pursue*** you all the days of your life?

Prayer

Close by sharing prayer requests and then pray for each other. Use the requests that were shared to finish the sentence:

“God, please help _____.”

Then read Psalm 23 again, all together. (If meeting online, have one person read out loud.)

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Several hundred years before Jesus, the prophet Isaiah proclaims another powerful message and a promise that shows where to turn in challenging times. In any circumstance, knowing the one in charge makes all the difference.

Icebreaker: What’s the most dangerous situation you’ve ever been in?

Matthew 6:25-34

²⁵ “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing?²⁶ Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are?²⁷ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

²⁸ “And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing,²⁹ yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are.³⁰ And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

³¹ “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’³² These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs.³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

³⁴ “So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

Read Matthew 6:25-34

1. What does Jesus say we should not worry about?
2. What do you think he means when he says, *“Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing?”*
3. Jesus gives several reasons why his followers should resist anxiety and worry. Which of these reasons stands out to you personally, and why?
4. What theme is repeated throughout verses 26-32?
5. How can Jesus’ promise in verses 33-34 help you face a crisis?

Isaiah 40:28-31

²⁸ Have you never heard?

Have you never understood?

The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of all the earth.

He never grows weak or weary.

No one can measure the depths of his
understanding.

²⁹ He gives power to the weak
and strength to the powerless.

³⁰ Even youths will become weak and tired,
and young men will fall in exhaustion.

³¹ But those who trust in the Lord will find
new strength.
They will soar high on wings like eagles.
They will run and not grow weary.
They will walk and not faint.

Read Isaiah 40:28-31

6. What attributes of God are listed in these verses?
7. What does God do for people according to these verses?
8. What is required in order to experience God's power?
9. What connections do you see between this section from Isaiah and Jesus' words in the Matthew 6 section?

Prayer

Close by sharing prayer requests and then praying for each other,

"God, please help _____."

Then read this prayer together. (If meeting online, have one person read the prayer out loud.)

God, in the middle of difficult times, help me to remember how important I am in your eyes, and that as you care for the birds and the flowers, you care even more for me. Show me how to trust you and experience the power, strength and endurance I read about in Isaiah. Please increase my strength and give me hope as I trust you. Amen.

Bible Discussions in Times of Crisis

“How Can I Find Peace?”

In the Bible, a letter known as Philippians was sent to a group of Christians who were struggling in their relationships with each other while also dealing with external pressures. The writer was Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ. At the time of writing he was a prisoner in Rome, waiting to be tried for his faith and uncertain whether he would be released or executed. He gives clear instructions for peace and contentment in every circumstance.

Icebreaker: How would you define peace and contentment?

Philippians 4:4-9

- ⁴ Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! ⁵ Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.
- ⁶ Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.
- ⁸ And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. ⁹ Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Read Philippians 4:4-7

1. What strong instructions are given in verses 4-6?
2. In your own words, what result is promised in verse 7?
3. In what ways do you think each instruction is related to the promise?
4. What do you think it means to *live in Christ Jesus*?

Read Philippians 4:8-9

5. What additional help does Paul give in verse 8 regarding how to guard your mind? Give examples of each category of things to think about.
6. How is verse 8 different from blind wishful thinking?
7. What practical steps can you take to keep putting these instructions into practice?

Prayer

Share prayer requests and then pray for each other by finishing this sentence:

“God, thank you for _____, and please help _____.”

Then read this prayer together. (If meeting online, have one person read the prayer out loud.)

O God, help us turn our worries into prayers every day. Help us fill our minds with what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. Please meet our needs from your unlimited resources. Show us what it means to live in Christ Jesus. Guard our hearts and minds with your peace, and let contentment and joy characterize our lives. Thank you! Amen.

Bible Discussions in Times of Crisis

“Where Can I Find Hope?”

The Bible reverberates with the theme of finding security, perspective, peace, and hope in God. *Hope*, as it is used in Scripture, means a “strong and confident expectation” that something will happen. It’s not merely a desire or wishful thinking. So how can we have confident hope? When we are facing life and death issues, what is needed to be certain of our place with God? These are crucial questions that deserve careful attention.

In one of the most important sections of the Bible, the Apostle Paul deals with these core questions in plain terms. He also gives powerful assurance of what we can count on when we *are* right with God—both for this life and beyond.

Icebreaker: In what types of things or people do you have confidence? Why is that?

Romans 3:21-28

²¹ But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. ²² We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

²³ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. ²⁵ For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, ²⁶ for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

²⁷ Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. ²⁸ So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.

Read Romans 3:21-28

1. What do you learn here about God and about people?
2. How are people made right with God according to these verses?
3. In your own words, what difference does Jesus’ death make?

Romans 8:31-39

- ³¹ What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?
- ³² Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?
- ³³ Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. ³⁴ Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us.
- ³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? ³⁶ (As the Scriptures say, "For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.") ³⁷ No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.
- ³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. ³⁹ No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Read Romans 8:31-39

4. What specific evidence do you find in verses 31-34 that God is *for* you?
5. What security can we have, even in extreme circumstances (verses 35-39)?
6. When things are in crisis, what could you do in order to live with assurance of these promises, and what difference would it make?

Prayer

Share prayer requests and then take turns finishing these sentences:

"God, please help _____."

"God, thank you that _____."

Then read this prayer together. (If meeting online, have one person read the prayer out loud.)

Dear God, thank you for clarifying how to be right with you. Help us remember you love us while we are in the middle of these hard times. Help us hold on to your promises today and tomorrow, having unwavering hope based on the assurance of your love, no matter what comes. Amen.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION



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