



4 Bible Discussions in Times of Uncertainty

Psalm 116 – Releasing Worry

Psalm 46 – Coping with Change

Psalm 139 – Facing the Unknown

Psalm 27 – Dealing with Fear

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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 the Bible says.

Using the Bible in Your Group

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, and there are many excellent English translations of the Bible. Unless otherwise indicated, most Q Place Bible discussion guides use the New International Version (NIV) when Scripture is printed in the text.

Groups often appreciate having different translations represented as they discuss the Bible together. Here is a list of English translations that are great options:

- Contemporary English Version (CEV)
- English Standard Version (ESV)
- New American Standard Bible (NASB)
- New International Version (NIV)
- New King James Version (NKJV)
- New Living Translation (NLT)
- New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

You can also access a variety of Bible translations online through [YouVersion](#) and [BibleGateway](#).

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Bible Discussions in Times of Uncertainty

Psalm 116 – Releasing Worry

You might have heard it said that worry is “wasted energy.” Our imaginations easily conjure up worst-case scenarios. We struggle with thoughts of what might happen to us, the “what ifs.” Worrying is actually a choice we make when faced with uncertainty. It provides a false sense of control. However, worry does not help to solve a problem. Instead, choosing to dwell on the past and/or obsess about future difficulties can become a habit that leads to distress, anxiety, and even physical illness.

In Matthew 6:27 Jesus warns about the futility of worrying: *“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?”* Jesus goes on to say in verse 34, *“So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.”* How then do we deal with our anxious thoughts? Psalm 116 shows us a pathway of freedom from worry.

Icebreaker: Are you a “glass half empty” pessimist, a “glass half full” optimist, or somewhere in the middle? How might this impact how you deal with worry in your life?

Read Psalm 116:1-4

1. This psalm opens with words of love and appreciation. What causes the psalmist to express such love for the Lord (verse 1)?
2. Think of a time when someone listened intently as you shared an overwhelming problem or concern. In what ways did that help to soothe your anxiety?
3. Why is the psalmist dedicated to lifelong prayer (verse 2)?
4. What problems had previously consumed the psalmist (verse 3)? What did he do to seek relief (verse 4)?

Read Psalm 116:5-7

5. What qualities of God are mentioned in verses 5 and 6?
6. If you believed these statements about God were true, what difference would that make in your life?

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7. Assuming you believe these qualities of God, how could you complete this sentence, “Dear God, I ask you to help release me from my worries about _____.”

Read Psalm 116:8-13

8. Why does the psalmist feel such a sense of gratitude?
9. How does he show his gratitude? How do you think that impacts him?

Read Psalm 116:14-19

10. Why do you think the psalmist is so determined to fulfill his vows to God in the presence of all his people (verses 14 and 18)?
11. What steps can you take to turn your worries over to the Lord?

Prayer

Share prayer requests for each other, then pray for each other by completing this sentence:

“God, we trust that you will listen and help _____ [name] with _____ [request or need].”

Then read this prayer together, or if you’re meeting online, have one person read the prayer out loud.

Dear God, thank you for hearing our voices when we turn to you in prayer. Help us to remember to call on your name when we are feeling overcome with worry. Release us from the chains of anxiety and bring us to a place of rest and peace. Help us to trust in your compassion and mercy. Amen.

Bible Discussions in Times of Uncertainty

Psalm 46 – Coping with Change

Change is inevitable. It is a part of life. But we so often feel fearful, because change threatens our stability. Much of change can be out of our control, making the future frightening and overwhelming. It is in times like this when God's ever-present love and power can provide strength and protection. When we stop and rest in the knowledge that God is in charge, we can find peace and assurance that new opportunities are possible.

Icebreaker: What are some personal significant changes you have experienced, and what opportunities did those changes open up for you?

Read Psalm 46:1-3

1. What is the meaning of the declaration with which this psalm begins?
2. Verses 1-3 describe terrifying situations. What does fear do to a person?
3. Describe a recent situation when you really needed a refuge, strength, or help.
4. How does this psalm suggest we can find a sense of stability even in the middle of chaos and calamity?

Read Psalm 46:4-7

5. List the contrasts you see between verses 2-3 and 4-5.
6. Who is mentioned in nearly every phrase of this section? In each case what action or situation is described?
7. The psalmist tells us that God is always with us and is our fortress. What difference does that make to you personally as you experience change and uncertainty?

Note: Unlike most great cities, Jerusalem had no river running through it. The people relied upon God to provide for them. God was their source of sustenance and protection for them. As long as they depended upon God they were safe and cared for. When they abandoned God, the city was no longer protected and it fell to adversaries.

Read Psalm 46:8-11

8. In these verses, what does God say we should do? Why this sequence?

9. When compared to the power of mankind, how can God's power and authority be a source of comfort and strength to us?

10. What does *Be still and know that I am God* mean to you?

11. What is the meaning of *refuge* and *fortress* (verses 1, 7, 11)?

12. Why do you think the psalmist repeats verse 7 as a conclusion to this psalm in verse 11? What will help you remember his message beyond today?

Note: In *The Amplified Bible*, these two verses read like this: *"The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge [our high tower and stronghold]. Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]!"*

Prayer

Close by sharing prayer requests and then take turns praying for each other by completing these sentences:

"God, please help _____, and thank you that _____"

Then read this prayer together, or if you're meeting online, have one person read the prayer out loud.

Dear God, thank you for promising to be with us at all times. Help us to remember you love us when changes and challenges come into our lives. Help us to be reassured that you are our fortress and our refuge where we can set aside fear and experience peace. Thank you for reminding us to be still, so that we can honor your power and majesty. Amen.

Bible Discussions in Times of Uncertainty

Psalm 139 – Facing the Unknown

The unknowns of life are filled with mystery, twists and turns. We may feel afraid to step into the unknown because we fear there is no safety net to catch us.

In a time when God's people were in exile with an unknown future, God sent them a specific message: ***“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”*** (Jeremiah 29:11).

Throughout history, people of God have gone through overwhelming challenges and uncertainties with confidence and hope after gaining a new understanding of God's purpose and care for them. Psalm 139 provides one of the most personal and expansive descriptions of his knowledge, presence, and care.

Icebreaker: What situation in your life did you fear would turn out badly, but later you saw an unexpected positive result?

Read Psalm 139:1-6

1. Based on these verses, what specific things does God know about you?
2. What else does God do besides **know** you?
3. What does this tell you about God?
4. How does David, the psalmist, react to these things (verse 6)?
5. How do you react to these verses?

Read Psalm 139:7-12

6. In verse 7, David considers where he can go to escape God's presence. What do you think prompts this questioning?
7. Why does avoiding God ultimately fail?

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8. What reassurance is expressed in verse 10? What does that mean to you?

Read Psalm 139:13-18

9. David feels overwhelmed when he realizes God's full knowledge of him (verses 1-6) and ponders fleeing from God's constant presence (verses 7-12). What does he come to understand in verses 13-18?
10. Why is he filled with gratitude?
11. How could the message in verses 17-18 provide you comfort and assurance as you wake up each day to the unknowns of the future?

Read Psalm 139:19-24

12. In verses 19-22, David has a sudden outburst of emotion about those who oppose God. Then his prayer turns back to his own heart condition and the reality that God knows him completely. In verses 23-24, what does David ask God to do for him?
13. If you would like to use the last two verses as a prayer to God through the coming week, what practical or creative ideas would help you do that?
14. How does the realization that God created you, that he is always present, and that he knows everything about you—even your unspoken thoughts—affect you as you face the unknowns of the future?

Prayer

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

“God, thank you for your loving presence as you help _____ [name] with _____.”

Then read this prayer together, or if you're meeting online, have one person read the prayer out loud.

Dear God, help me to understand how completely you know me, love me, accept me, and are with me in every situation. May every step I take into the unknown be taken with the assurance that you are always there to guide and support me. May this bring me comfort and peace, no matter what comes. Amen.

Bible Discussions in Times of Uncertainty

Psalm 27 – Dealing with Fear

Fear is one of the most basic human emotions. It can serve us well as a warning, cautioning us to be careful when we are unsure or feel unsafe. At its worst, it can create in us severe anxiety and rob us of peace and joy. When our focus is on God instead of on our fear, we can find comfort and relief.

In John 14:27, Jesus tells his followers, *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

In Psalm 27 David embraces the assurance that the LORD is with him. As a result, he is able to deal with fear both honestly and courageously.

Icebreaker: With the many crises happening in the world today, what is one of your greatest fears? Why?

Read Psalm 27:1-3

1. David, the psalmist, is facing evil men, enemies and armies. Why is he not afraid?
2. The Lord may not literally protect us from our troubles or fears, but he does promise to be our light, our salvation and place of peace. How does this understanding of God help us as we experience our own anxious thoughts?

Read Psalm 27:4-6

3. In these verses, what specifically will the psalmist do? What will the Lord do?
4. How would such a viewpoint help you to deal with fear?

Read Psalm 27:7-12

5. Why does David turn to the Lord in prayer?
6. What does David ask for?
7. What do his requests reveal about his fear?

Read Psalm 27:13-14

8. Put David's statement of faith (verse 13) into your own words.

9. How did David gain this confidence?

10. What part do faith, waiting, and courage play in combating fear? Explain the importance of each.

11. Why do you think placing your confidence in God is important when facing your fears?

12. How could you develop more confidence in God?

Prayer

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

"God, please show your power as you help (name) _____ deal with_____."

Read the entire psalm as a prayer, consciously putting yourself into the place of "I" throughout. Each person can read silently, or one can read aloud while all listen.

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION



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