

LIVING

IN

GOD'S

GOODNESS

P S A L M 2 3

## TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **LISTEN WITHOUT FIXING AND TEACHING.** People desperately need a safe place to share their thoughts and be real with others. Give people space to talk without trying to fix them, correct their thoughts or teach. Choose the relationship over the desire to cast judgement or prove your point over theirs, to be "right".

## Week 2: Our Caretaker and Healer

### ICEBREAKER

Where do you go to relax and recharge when you need a break from your busy life?

### INTRODUCTION

The pace or speed of life seems to be going so fast these days. The instant satisfaction generation that has grown up with the internet with all their wants and desires being only a click away. Yet they seem to have no peace. Social media, social pressure and the desire to fit in and be recognized has put much of society on a path of discontentment. This week we will be focusing on God's desire for us to slow down, relax and recharge in His care as our Good Shepherd.

## READ |

*He **makes me lie down** in green pastures, he leads me beside **quiet waters**...*  
--Psalm 23:2 (NIV)

You may have heard of the expression "curiosity killed the cat" but it is sheep who often let their curiosity get the best of them in pursuit of greener fields. We can feel the temptation to move toward anything that looks like greener pastures. We may leave what we know to chase after our desires. Our own understanding and sinful nature wants to lead us as we seek out validation and fulfillment from the world.

*...each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.*  
--James 1:14-15 (ESV)

Where the world will always have us going this way and that chasing more, God wants to set our path straight. But in order for him to make us lie down and relax or lead us to what we need, we must **submit to Him and trust that His ways are greater than ours**.

**In what areas do you struggle with impulsive decision making? (Examples: Career, Relationships, Food, Buying etc.) Do you believe that if you submit to God in these areas he can help to guide and provide for you in a more peaceful and relaxing way?**

## READ | **REST YOUR BODY AND MIND**

*"Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the Lord made them holy."*  
--Ezekiel 20:12 (NIV)

God commands us to take 1 day off every 7 to rest and recharge from the stressors in our lives to focus on Him. It's called the Sabbath. This day of rest ensures we are **refreshed and ready** to walk in God's will for our lives. Jesus said the Sabbath was made for our benefit. What a blessing to know that God commands us to take one day off each week to refresh our body, mind and soul and refocus on Him!

*..“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.: --Mark 2:27 (NIV)*

**Do you take a sabbath day off each week? How do you refresh your body, mind and spirit?**

## READ | **EVALUATE YOUR THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS**

*Let us test and examine our ways, and **return to the Lord!** --Lamentations 3:40 (ESV)*

The bible is full of instructions for how to connect to God and choose Him and His will for your life. An important part of the process is growing through the experiences God places in your life. Remembering that each is an opportunity to **get better, not bitter** as we try to be more Christ-like and find peace in who we are in Christ.

*Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, **that Jesus Christ is in you**—unless indeed you fail the test?  
--2 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV)*

Through Jesus' sacrifice and giving of the Holy Spirit **He is alive in us!** We just need to take the time to evaluate if we are living for the Christ in us or our own fleshly desires.

**How does it feel to know Christ is alive in you? What are some things you can do to ensure you are feeding the Christ in you and not your flesh?**

## **READ | LOVE YOURSELF DAILY**

God created you perfectly for this time. He knew you before you were born and set you apart to be a vessel for good in this world. We need to make sure we love ourselves as temples of God, to ensure we are ready and able to receive the blessings He has for us.

*Don't you know that **you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?** If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. --1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (NIV)*

God created you as a masterpiece but sometimes we can only focus on what we don't like about ourselves, not seeing the whole picture. Just as we are called to have a relationship with God, we are called to **understand and love how He made us.**

**What is your relationship like with yourself? Do you know what feeds you and what drains you? What can you do to better love yourself in honor of how God made you?**

## **READ | ASK FOR HELP**

We often think we know best. Our flesh leads us to short cuts, quick fixes and other temptations that promise relief. For this, the path is wide. However, if we want to take the narrow path God has for our lives, we need the advice and accountability of others.

*Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others. --Proverbs 12:15 (NLT)*

Christ raised disciples and preached fellowship because he understood we are not meant to do life alone. When we seek honest and righteous counsel from other

believers, it releases worry and makes room for God to speak life into our doubts.

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. --James 5:16 (NIV)*

**Do you have righteous people in your life you can confess your worries, burdens and sins too? Discuss a time you asked for help and found relief and comfort from others.**

## **READ | EXCHANGE ME TIME FOR GOD TIME**

God leads us beside quiet streams because he wants us to be rested and ready. However, He leads us, so we need to make time in our "me time" to put God first.

*I can do all this through him who gives me strength. --Philippians 4:13 (NIV)*

Whether it is television, music, books or activities we all take time to recharge ourselves. While this can be helpful and healthy, we should always remember where our real strength comes from and make sure we seek ways to recharge with God; in his Word, praying, worshipping, serving, and fellowshiping.

**What is your go-to way to unwind and recharge? How can you make room for God in your me time? (Ex: listen to worship music, watch sermons online, read the bible etc.)**

## **WHAT WILL YOU DO?**

Submit to God's will for you to RELAX this week by making time to:

- **Rest your Body and Mind:** Take a day of rest / sabbath
- **Evaluate Your Thoughts and Actions:** How can you get better not bitter
- **Love Yourself Daily:** Practice healthy ways of self care
- **Ask for Help:** Confide in a fellow believer and confess any burdensome thoughts
- **EXchange Me Time for God Time:** Replace secular with Christian entertainment

## **ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):**

- On the next page do the daily devotion S.O.A.P. for each day this week.

## **CLOSE IN PRAYER:**

Dear Father, Thank You for caring for me. When I submit to You, You focus on my needs by making me relax and recharge. I pray for Your healing in my life, that You give me the strength to rest, reflect, practice self care, seek help from others and put You first, even in my me time. I invite Your green pastures and quiet waters into my life. Your ways are better than mine, I give You all the glory and praise. In Jesus' name, amen.



## Make Time to be in God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S - Scripture**
- O - Observation**
- A - Application**
- P - Prayer**

### Here's an example:

**S:** *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

*--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)*

**O:** Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

**A:** Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

**P:** Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

## SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

### **Day 1:**

***Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.***

***--Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)***

### **Day 2:**

***Trouble and distress have come upon me, but your commands give me delight.***

***--Psalms 119:143 (NIV)***

### **Day 3:**

***"In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it.***

***--Isaiah 30:15 (NIV)***

### **Day 4:**

***"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.***

***--Exodus 20:8-10 (ESV)***

### **Day 5:**

***These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."***

***--John 16:33 (NASB)***