

LIVING

IN

GOD'S

GOODNESS

P S A L M 2 3

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **BE COMFORTABLE WITH SILENCE.** Uncomfortable silences are bound to happen. It's okay! A long pause during a group discussion can be powerful. A *pause* gives space for quieter people to break into the conversation; silence allows people to figure out exactly what they would like to say.

Week 3: Our Restorer and Life Leader

ICEBREAKER

What is something that you have restored? (Ex: An old car, a relationship, property etc.)

INTRODUCTION

Just as we call on the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit to give us balance in our spiritual life, we must care for our body, mind and soul to give us balance in our physical life. Last week we focused on how our Shepherd leads us to RELAX and rest our body and mind. This week we will be focused on Christ as the one who *restores our soul* and how a balanced body, mind and soul prepares us to be a vessel for God and His great work in and through our lives. God wants to lead you in His righteousness for your life.

READ |

Psalm 23 builds upon each verse similar to the way God wants to build you up. First He wants you to submit and become content with your circumstance. Then, He orders you to rest your body and mind to become healthy and ready for what comes next:

*He **restores** my soul.*

--Psalm 23:3 (ESV)

Your soul is the vessel of your consciousness, the part of your mind that thinks, chooses and feels. It is the central force in thought, emotion, and behavior that makes up who you are. Remember, God made you **PERFECTLY** and with all the power in your soul needed to complete His plans and purposes for your life. However, we are born into a broken world that wants to rob you of your power and if possible, destroy your soul.

*The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a **rich and satisfying life**.*

—John 10:10 (NLT)

Abuse, trauma and other bad influences will damage our mind, hurt our soul, cause us to sin and separate us from the power God created in us to lead rich and satisfying lives. To restore our souls, we must first clear out the mess the world has made in our lives.

*Yes, all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious ideal; yet now God declares us "**not guilty**" of offending him **if we trust in Jesus Christ**, who in his kindness freely takes away our sins.*

--Romans 3:23-24 (TLB)

With our sins no longer defining our lives we are free to pursue the refreshing, strengthening and restoration of our soul and the discovery of who we are in Christ.

Could your soul use a refreshing, strengthening or restoration? How does knowing Christ died to forgive your sins make it easier for you to forgive yourself? Discuss?

READ |

We are so lucky to have a loving God that made the first move in restoring our soul. With our sins forgiven by God through Christ, we are able to begin the restoration process. Below are three things we can do to restore our souls:

Trust in Jesus Christ to Forgive Ourselves: It can be hard to believe that God has forgiven all our mistakes and even harder to forgive ourselves. In Romans 3:24 (above) the key is to trust in Jesus as our Good Shepherd. As we trust that **Christ's way is better than our own** and allow ourselves to be fueled by **God's righteousness** instead of our own self righteousness, we can forgive the old us and embrace the new.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!
--2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

Claim Victory Over The Offenses of Others: It is always easier to forgive the messes we make, than to forgive the messes that others make for us. The wrongs others have done to us can be a bitter root that makes us feel imprisoned by our circumstances and separated from God. When Christ claimed victory over death, he showed us that we can **overcome anything**. When we follow His example, we are called to forgive others and overcome any hurt they caused by claiming victory over our past to **focus on our future**.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
--Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)

Share The Burdens of Life with Christ:

*Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. **Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls...**”*
--Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

Christians want to give the glory to Christ for all the good things in our lives. However, we often forget that He tells us to also give Him our burdens as well. Restoring our souls to God's original creation can be a hard and heavy process. **Lean on Jesus and his teachings in the bible** to rest our souls and help us lift the burdens of our past and present to reclaim the power God has for our future.

Please review the three parts of restoring our soul in bold above. Which of the three parts of restoration is hardest for you? Why?

READ |

When we are under Christ's care, we are rested, recharged, restored and ready for what lies ahead. Now we must let him lead us to fulfill His plans and purposes for our lives.

He leads me in paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. --Psalm 23:3 (ESV)

Only God knows the path ahead. To walk it requires our full body, mind and soul moving in faith that Christ is leading us along the right paths. Here are four ways to be Christ led:

Don't Follow The World or Others:

*Dear children, **do not let anyone** lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.*
--1 John 3:7 (NIV)

ANYONE! Even friends, family and influences can be used as tools by the devil to lead you astray. We must trust Jesus and allow his teachings to be your strength in choosing to stay in the Will of God. We are born into the world but we are not meant to be of it.

Be Like The Bereans: The Bereans were a group of Jews in the city of Berea who:

... received the message (of Christ) with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. --Acts 17:11 (NIV)

Like the Bereans, we must stay in God's Word daily and continue to examine what we learn from the world against the scriptures to ensure it is true and not a deception.

Pray and Have Patience: As we walk a path we cannot see, we must pray in faith for God to show the way. When we listen patiently, He will give us what we need to move.

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. --James 1:5 (NLT)

Call Upon the Holy Spirit: Sometimes we can feel lost and don't know what to do next. When we humble ourselves and call upon the Holy Spirit it can lift us out of our doubts. Let the Holy Spirit be a source of strength that sustains you in your patience.

And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us...--Romans 8:26 (NIV)

Do you feel Christ led? Which of the ways above can you improve on in your walk?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

- Do a heart check to see where your soul could use restoration and lean on God, His Word and the Holy Spirit to help guide you in your next steps as a believer.

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

Do the daily devotion S.O.A.P. each day this week, found on the next page.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

God, Thank You for making me perfectly with all the power I need to live a rich and satisfying life. Help me to receive Your forgiveness so that I can forgive myself and others. Allow that forgiveness to create a space in me for You to restore my soul so that I may walk the paths of Your righteousness. Be my life leader as I leave the ways of the world to follow You. I am ready for Your will to be done in my life, 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:

And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?

--Matthew 16:26 (NLT)

Day 2:

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?

--Mark 8:36 (ESV)

Day 3:

The soul that sins is the soul that dies. The child does not share the guilt of the parent, nor the parent the guilt of the child. If you live upright and well, you get the credit; if you live a wicked life, you're guilty as charged.

--Ezekiel 18:20 (MSG)

Day 4:

"Do not be afraid of them," the Lord said to Joshua, "for I have given you victory over them. Not a single one of them will be able to stand up to you."

--Joshua 10:8 (NLT)

Day 5:

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

--Romans 12:12 (ESV)