

THROUGH THE FOG

A Bible Study on God's Goodness
Amidst Physical Suffering

LEADER GUIDE

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GOD'S GOT THIS!

Welcome to the *Through the Fog Leader Guide*. Whether you feel like leadership is one of your gifts or whether you're leading this group out of obedience, I am grateful you're here. I believe God is going to use you mightily to lead the group of people He brought to you over the next six weeks. Whether your group is small or large, God knew before the beginning of time exactly whom He would bring to cross paths during this study. He knows all of the hurts each person will bring to the group each meeting, and He knows exactly how He wants to speak to them through His Word. Your responsibility is simply to show up, give God your five loaves and two fish (Mark 6), and let Him do the rest.

I created this guide to give you practical tips as you begin this journey. If you want to use all of these practices just like they are, go for it. If you want to lead the group without using this guide at all, that's great too! Please ask God how He would like you to lead your group, and be open to the Holy Spirit's direction in how you proceed.

Whether you've got this or not, God's got it. He'll lead you through the fog as you lead others. The way out is through. I'm honored to join you in leading others to Jesus through this study.

JERA



TIPS TO HELP YOU GET STARTED

PRAY

Remember that God is the one doing the work here, not you. Your responsibility is to steward a safe place where God can connect with each person and people can connect with each other. Pray over yourself, the participants in your group, and the study each week. If you're up for it, pray over the space where you meet, pray over the chairs where people will sit, etc. before people arrive each week. Give your time to God and repent of your pride or need for control as you lead.

PREPARE

"Prior preparation prevents poor performance," my coach used to say. Being the leader of this study doesn't require a lot of preparation, but take ownership for what you can do to prepare each week. Read the Leader Guide, read the introduction for each week, scan the pages of study for the week ahead to get an idea of topics or questions that might be brought up, print out the Viewer Guide Keys, etc.

COMMUNICATE

Tell people with advance notice if there are any changes to where you're meeting or what time you're meeting. It can be helpful to have the phone number of each person in your group for both communication and to check in with them during the week to ask how you can pray for them.

SET BOUNDARIES

If you're choosing to lead a Bible study, you have a heart for helping people. I love that, and God is honored by that. As you love people well, keep in mind that it is okay to keep healthy emotional boundaries. If someone shares something with you that is beyond your capacity to help with, refer them to their pastor or counselor. In addition, if someone shares about abuse or illegal activity, you might be required by law to inform the proper authorities.

MATERIALS

Each person in your Bible study group will need a study book. Make sure you give participants time to order and receive their book before your first meeting. Bring extra pens to the meeting in case people need them, and encourage participants to bring their Bible to look up and reference passages each week.

FOOD AND SNACKS

Many Bible studies like to share snacks or food as part of their meeting time. Food can be a great ice breaker, and there is a special fellowship that can happen around a dinner table. However, particularly in a Bible study for people in physical suffering, you will most likely have at least one, if not many, people in your group who have dietary restrictions or food allergies. Food can make them feel insecure, triggered, or like they are a burden if others are asked to meet their needs. Consider asking people to eat before coming to group or stick to "safe" foods for your group if you think this could be an issue.

CREATING SAFE SHARING SPACES

Before your Week One discussion, I ask you to create some rules for your group about how you will create a safe sharing space during your discussions. This study covers topics that can be triggering and controversial, so it is imperative to set good guardrails in advance to avoid unnecessary hurt, confusion, and conflict. Below I've created some tips for creating a safe sharing space:

SAID HERE, STAYS HERE

Create a rule of confidentiality that people will not share what others reveal in the group. Have integrity, and don't share what people have entrusted you with, even to your spouse or someone you think they'll "never know" you told.

NO INTERRUPTING

It can feel disempowering to share something that's on your heart and then be interrupted. Let people finish their thoughts and sentences before adding what you want to say. On the other hand, if there is someone who consistently dominates the conversation, the leader may need to step in to redirect and give others a chance to share, as well.

NO PHONES

In this day and age of technology, it can be hard to unplug. But looking at our phones (or smart watches, or other devices) during group can make people feel unheard and disrespected. If someone has a genuine need to watch their phone, discuss that. Otherwise, consider having the leader keep track of time. Then everyone else can turn their phones on silent and put them away.

HEALTH ADVICE

With a group of people who all have had journeys through physical suffering, it can be tempting to want to offer your medical advice if you know of something that could help their situation. Consider making a rule to not offer health advice to another without permission. If you really believe your tip could help someone, ask them if they would be open to hearing your health idea before sharing it with them.

PHYSICAL NEEDS

In order to make the space comfortable for everyone, consider having a conversation at your first meeting regarding the physical needs of your participants. Perhaps someone has migraines that are triggered by smells, and it would be best for everyone not to wear cologne or perfume when you meet. Perhaps someone might be more comfortable in a certain sitting position or chair because of their chronic pain, and you could accommodate them with a little shift. Be honest and open to compromise if possible when sharing your own needs and listening to those of others.

H AND H

As a general guideline for conversations, remain honest and honoring as you share. You can be honest without being unkind, and you can share your hurt without demeaning other people. To the best of your ability, try to remain honest and honoring to those present in the group with you and to people who are not present whom you may be talking about as you process your pain.

INFO PAGE

(Weekly Group Meetings)

CONNECT

This is the time when people are arriving and talking before you watch the video teaching for the week. I'll provide some tips for connection to get everyone comfortable. Jumping straight into the video teaching can feel a bit cold, so think of this section as a way to help people feel comfortable and cozy.

WATCH

Once you feel a good connection has been made, play the video teaching for the week. As a reminder, the video teachings can be accessed in the TTF Portal, which you can find by scanning the QR code below. The access password is in your study book in the Getting Started pages. If you want more time to discuss, you could encourage participants to watch the video teaching before they arrive each week. Watching the teaching before or during each gathering can work nicely, depending on your group.

**DISCUSS**

Each week, I've provided discussion questions to help get good conversation flowing. These can be found in your study book or below in this Leader Guide. These questions are designed to review the previous week of personal study and then to talk about the video teaching for the week. Use these questions if desired, make up your own questions, or do whatever fits the needs of your group and your leadership style.

PRAY

I encourage you to end each meeting by praying. Prayer is powerful, and the Word tells us that the prayer of a righteous man (or woman) is powerful and effective (James 5:16). Prayer shifts things in the unseen realm, connects us to God, and will conclude each day by reminding everyone Whom we trust with our lives and our health.

PERSONAL STUDY

Each week (except for week 7) includes five days of personal study to encourage participants to connect with God through His Word on their own. The study is designed to where you can meet with your group and watch the video teaching on one day, do each day of personal study on your own, and have one day of Sabbath to rest or catch up before meeting again. Encourage your group to complete the personal days of study, but remember to be kind and understanding even if they don't.

DISCUSSION GUIDES

(Week One)

CONNECT

Welcome everyone to the group as they arrive. Keep your eye out for people who are shy or are being left out of conversations, and try to make sure you personally connect with each person (use their name and make eye contact) at least once each meeting. Once everyone has arrived, begin the group by asking everyone what they felt like they learned or how God spoke to them over the last week.

WATCH

Play the teaching video for Week One. Encourage people to participate how they learn best, either by only listening or by filling in the blanks on the Viewer Guide and taking notes. Consider printing the Key to the Viewer Guides in the Resource Portal or having it ready on your phone in case anyone misses a blank and would like the answer.

DISCUSS

If you are discussing these questions in a group, take some time to establish ground rules for the group that will make people feel they can share in a safe space. See page 4 for more on creating safe sharing space.

- 1. What physical pain or limitation (either your own or that of someone else) has brought you to this study?**
- 2. Do you feel like you have fallen into a pit of discouragement, anger, or loneliness because of the fog in your life? If you don't currently find yourself in a pit, have you been there before? Explain.**
- 3. What has been your background in the topic of pain and healing? Are you interested in the topic because you want to learn more about God? Have you been hurt by other Christians and what they have said about physical pain and healing?**
- 4. What theology (beliefs about God's nature and truth) do you have surrounding pain and healing?** (If everyone in the group is honest and vulnerable, you will most likely disagree with someone in your group about something you find in this study at some point. This would be a good time to review the ground rules for how to create a safe space before sharing answers to this question.)
- 5. What do you hope to gain from this study?**

PRAY

For the first week, I suggest closing the group in prayer yourself. This way, you can lead by example. You also won't put anyone on the spot, which can be intimidating in a new group of people on the first week of gathering.

(Week Two)


CONNECT

Welcome everyone to the group as they arrive. Keep your eye out for people who are shy or are being left out of conversations, and try to make sure you personally connect with each person (use their name and make eye contact) at least once each meeting. Once everyone has arrived, begin the group by asking everyone what they felt like they learned or how God spoke to them over the last week.

WATCH

Play the teaching video for Week Two. Encourage people to participate how they learn best, either by only listening or by filling in the blanks on the Viewer Guide and taking notes. Consider printing the Key to the Viewer Guides in the Resource Portal or having it ready on your phone in case anyone misses a blank and would like the answer.

DISCUSS

- 1. After finishing Week One, how did you feel about grieving your losses? Had you ever been taught or practiced grieving with hope previously?**
 - 2. Where do you currently find yourself on the Lament Quadrant by Kelly Kopic from Day One? Explain.**
 - 3. How have different "locusts" (From Day Six) eaten through parts of your life? Share about the different "locusts" or trials you've been through, whether the hardships were physical or not.**
 - 4. How has Jesus met you in some of the hardest seasons and trials of your life?**
 - 5. What gives you the most hope when you are enduring pain and suffering?**
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PRAY

End by praying for each other. This week, pray in a style that your time and discernment allows. If you feel it would be best for you to close each week in prayer, do that. If you'd like to encourage other people's participation, you can ask someone you think would be comfortable praying out loud to "open" the prayer, and then you "close" the prayer. In between, anyone who wants to pray can choose to do so. Make sure you wait long enough to give people a chance to pray before you close. Embrace the silence of waiting. This can be good for the second week because it still doesn't directly ask anyone to pray out loud; they can choose not to if they don't want to.

(Week Three)


CONNECT

Welcome everyone to the group as they arrive. Keep your eye out for people who are shy or are being left out of conversations, and try to make sure you personally connect with each person (use their name and make eye contact) at least once each meeting. Once everyone has arrived, begin the group by asking everyone what they felt like they learned or how God spoke to them over the last week.

WATCH

Play the teaching video for Week Three. Encourage people to participate how they learn best, either by only listening or by filling in the blanks on the Viewer Guide and taking notes. Consider printing the Key to the Viewer Guides in the Resource Portal or having it ready on your phone in case anyone misses a blank and would like the answer.

DISCUSS

- 1. Which purpose(s) from Week Two stood out to you as a helpful way to think about some of the purposes for your pain? Why?**
 - 2. Do you feel your physical pain or illness has transformed you for the better or for the worst in the past? Share an example.**
 - 3. What emotions were brought up as you read through the Gray Zone stories this week?**
 - 4. What was enlightening about Session Three? Did the teaching make you think about anything you hadn't considered previously?**
 - 5. After viewing Session Three, what questions do you have? Did you disagree with anything in the teaching?**
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Spend some time praying for each other, that God would open your minds to receive His truth and understand His Word this week, that He would protect you from any potentially hurtful ideas, and that He would use your willingness to be challenged to take you into a deeper relationship with Him.

PRAY

If a certain kind of prayer is working for your group, continue that. If you'd like to challenge others to pray (and you have a somewhat small group), you could try asking each person to pray for the person to their left, assuming you're sitting in a somewhat circular shape.

(Week Four)

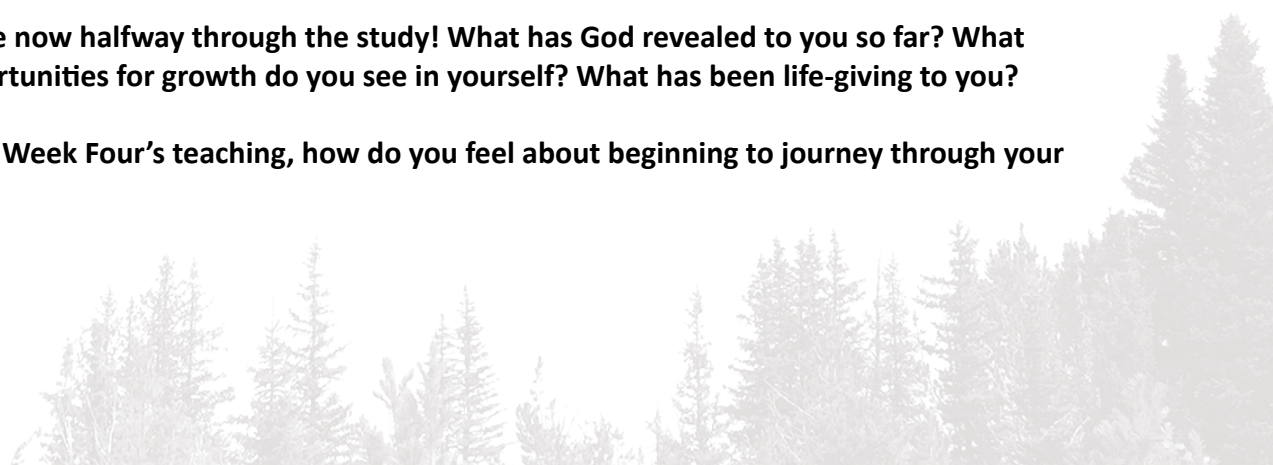
CONNECT

Welcome everyone to the group as they arrive. Keep your eye out for people who are shy or are being left out of conversations, and try to make sure you personally connect with each person (use their name and make eye contact) at least once each meeting. Once everyone has arrived, begin the group by asking everyone what they felt like they learned or how God spoke to them over the last week.

WATCH

Play the teaching video for Week Four. Encourage people to participate how they learn best, either by only listening or by filling in the blanks on the Viewer Guide and taking notes. Consider printing the Key to the Viewer Guides in the Resource Portal or having it ready on your phone in case anyone misses a blank and would like the answer.

DISCUSS

1. After “embracing the clouds” in Week Three, which specific could was the most difficult for you to learn about? Why?
 2. After “embracing the coulds” in Week Three, which specific could was the most freeing or encouraging for you to learn about? Why?
 3. Did Week Three bring up any wounds from your past, whether they were part of your healing journey or not?
 4. We’re now halfway through the study! What has God revealed to you so far? What opportunities for growth do you see in yourself? What has been life-giving to you?
 5. After Week Four’s teaching, how do you feel about beginning to journey through your fog?
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6. What obstacles do you foresee as you start to walk out what you've learned amidst the fog?

7. Spend some time praying for each other and your current needs in your group.

PRAY

Feel free to continue praying in the way that works for your group. If you want another adventure, you could try "simultaneous prayer". This is where you give a prompt, like "Let's lift up our journeys in the fog to God right now," or "Let's ask God to help us each embrace our coulds this week" and then everyone prays out loud, at the same time. This can be a fun, new way to pray, but also note that it might be very distracting for people with focus issues or it can be a poor choice for anyone with sensory issues.

(Week Five)

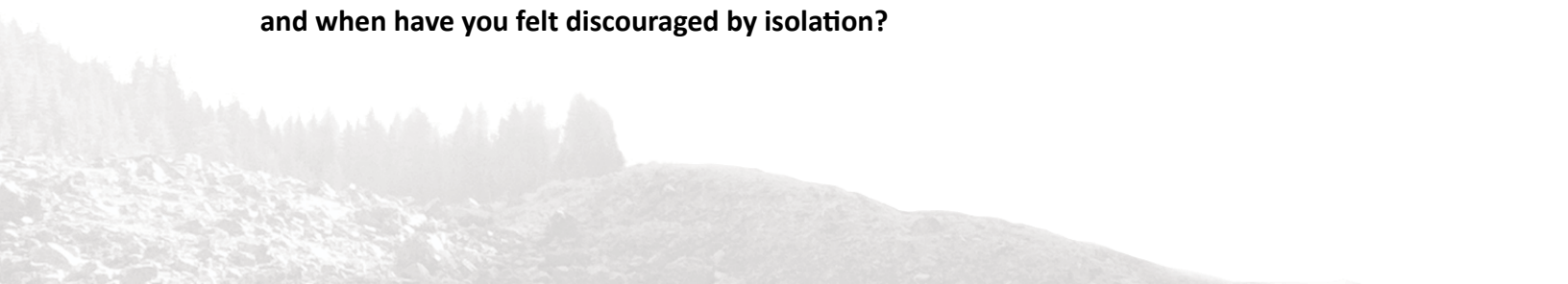
CONNECT

Welcome everyone to the group as they arrive. Keep your eye out for people who are shy or are being left out of conversations, and try to make sure you personally connect with each person (use their name and make eye contact) at least once each meeting. Once everyone has arrived, begin the group by asking everyone what they felt like they learned or how God spoke to them over the last week.

WATCH

Play the teaching video for Week Five. Encourage people to participate how they learn best, either by only listening or by filling in the blanks on the Viewer Guide and taking notes. Consider printing the Key to the Viewer Guides in the Resource Portal or having it ready on your phone in case anyone misses a blank and would like the answer.

DISCUSS

- 1. Do you feel like you've had any survival techniques that have turned into present sin patterns? If so, what are they?**
 - 2. Have you heard about the Spoon theory before? Practice using it with the group. Have each person describe how many spoons they started their day with and which activities in their life generally take up the most spoons.**
 - 3. Where do you feel like God is asking you to be obedient to Him in your life?**
 - 4. Do you enjoy solitude, or is it difficult for you? When have you felt refreshed by solitude and when have you felt discouraged by isolation?**
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5. **Have you seen the gift of miraculous healing abused? Have you seen a miraculous healing that honored God and others? Share your experience with this type of healing or your opinions of the Gray Zone excerpts this week.**
6. **What does it look like to humbly yield to Christ's lordship in your journey through the fog of pain and disease?**

PRAY

At this point, you've spent four weeks together as a group. If you feel it would be well-received by your group members, split up into partners or small groups to pray for each other more specifically and intimately. If this doesn't work, feel free to close the group in prayer yourself.

(Week Six)

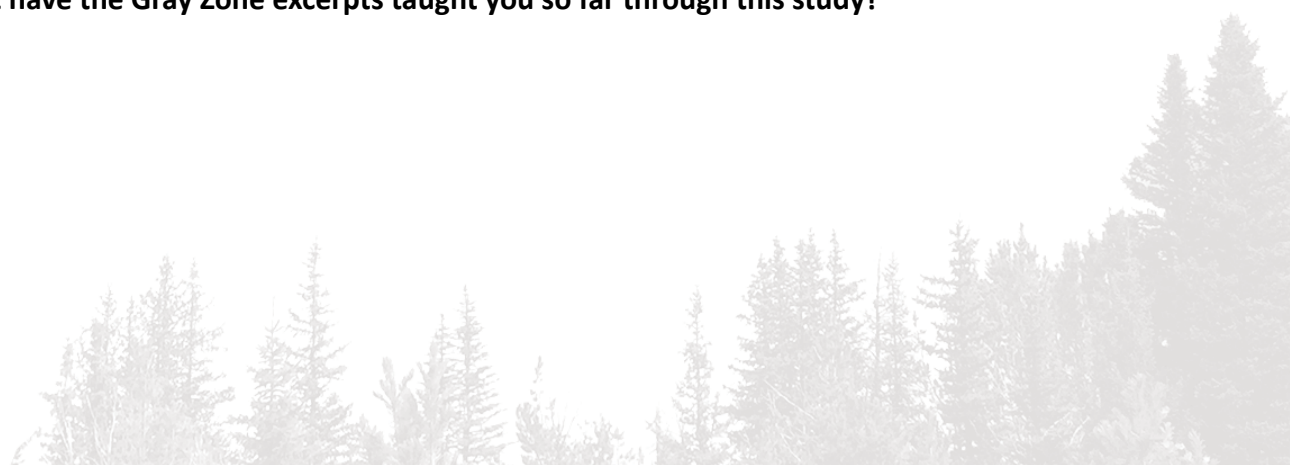
CONNECT

Welcome everyone to the group as they arrive. Keep your eye out for people who are shy or are being left out of conversations, and try to make sure you personally connect with each person (use their name and make eye contact) at least once each meeting. Once everyone has arrived, begin the group by asking everyone what they felt like they learned or how God spoke to them over the last week.

WATCH

Play the teaching video for Week Six. Encourage people to participate how they learn best, either by only listening or by filling in the blanks on the Viewer Guide and taking notes. Consider printing the Key to the Viewer Guides in the Resource Portal or having it ready on your phone in case anyone misses a blank and would like the answer.

DISCUSS

1. **What trials are you currently facing in addition to your physical pain or illness?**
 2. **Are there any "gas tanks" from Day One last week that you struggle to fill? Why?**
 3. **Have you or how have you seen the Word of God be a weapon in your life?**
 4. **What have the Gray Zone excerpts taught you so far through this study?**
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- 5. Did you feel convicted to fast and pray for something in particular this week? If so, share with your group.**
- 6. When you think about God redeeming your losses, what emotions come up?**
- 7. Spend some time talking about anything special you'd like to do as a group next week to celebrate completing this study together. Keep in mind many people with health struggles have dietary restrictions, and find ways to make it fun while honoring everyone's boundaries. If you want to simply meet in the normal way again, that's fine too!**

PRAY

Close in prayer in the way that you feel is best. You can either choose a prayer style from a previous week or use a different one that you're familiar with.

(Week Seven)

CONNECT

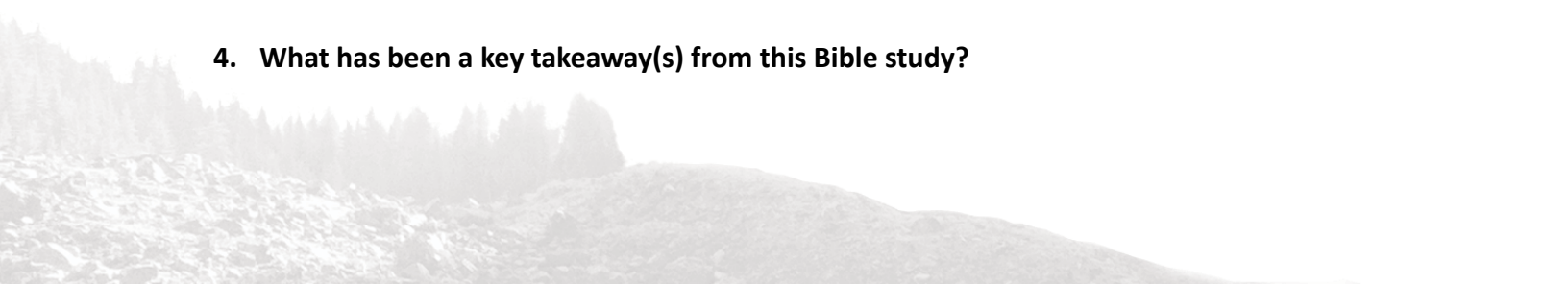
Welcome everyone to the group as they arrive. Keep your eye out for people who are shy or are being left out of conversations, and try to make sure you personally connect with each person (use their name and make eye contact) at least once each meeting. Once everyone has arrived, begin the group by asking everyone what they felt like they learned or how God spoke to them over the last week.

WATCH

Play the teaching video for Week Seven. Encourage people to participate how they learn best, either by only listening or by filling in the blanks on the Viewer Guide and taking notes. Consider printing the Key to the Viewer Guides in the Resource Portal or having it ready on your phone in case anyone misses a blank and would like the answer.

DISCUSS

Feel free to jump ahead to question six if you'd like to spend a substantial amount of time affirming your group members to close your time together. If your group prefers more conversation prompts for your final discussion, feel free to use the questions below.

- 1. How have you seen God redeem your physical suffering or another kind of pain?**
 - 2. Where do you most seek to take control in your life?**
 - 3. If your body could speak, how would it say that you treat it?**
 - 4. What has been a key takeaway(s) from this Bible study?**
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5. **What is a practical action step you will take in order to keep growing after this study ends?**
6. **Conclude the study by sharing positive affirmations of each person in your group - something you admire in them, a way you've seen them be brave in showing up through this study, or a way you've seen them grow over the past six weeks.**

Option 1: Complete your affirmations verbally. There is something powerful about being affirmed out loud in the presence of others.

Option 2: Write affirmations on an index card or a piece of paper for each person in the group. (Sit in a circle. Give time increments of two minutes to write your affirmation and then pass the index card to the next person. Repeat until you have written an affirmation for each person in the group.) Read the affirmations out loud, and then each person can take home their index card of encouragement as a reminder.

PRAY

I highly encourage you this week to pray out loud for each member of your group. This can look like you directing whom you are praying for, It's powerful to close this study by praying for each other, in whatever way works best for your group.



FOLLOW-UP

When you finish the study, be sure to celebrate and help your group members celebrate! That is no small feat, and I applaud your commitment and perseverance. Once the study ends, your group members may want some ideas of how they can continue growing closer to Jesus amidst their physical suffering. Below are some suggestions for your group members to continue their journeys through the fog with Jesus.

STAY CONNECTED

Share your contact information with the others in the group and let them share their information with each other if desired. You all have been on quite the journey together over the past six weeks, and staying connected to encourage each other in your newfound victories is a great path forward. If the group doesn't want to stay connected on a regular basis (that's fine, too) then encourage each group member to be in some kind of community where they can continue to pursue Jesus with other believers.

LISTEN TO THE HEAL MINISTRY PODCAST

Available wherever podcasts are found (Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, etc.), the Heal Ministry podcast has over 100 episodes with people who have gone on their own journeys through physical suffering. You'll be encouraged through the Holy Spirit to see God's goodness through the fog as you listen to each interview.

READ A TOPICAL BOOK

Check out our recommended books (<https://www.thehealministry.com/books>), where you can search a book based on topic, type of healing, or type of physical suffering. Whether it's a deeper dive into a specific theological aspect of healing or a memoir of someone who has walked through an issue similar to yours, we've got you covered. If you don't see something you're looking for, feel free to reach out to us through the Contact button on our website and we may be able to connect you to the resource you're looking for.

SIGN UP FOR THE HEAL MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

To stay up-to-date on the many resources we have in the works to further your relationship with Christ through the fog, subscribe to the Heal Ministry newsletter by scanning the QR code below. You can also click or enter this link here: <https://mailchi.mp/e10631f692b8/subscribetoheal>

