



GOD IS OUR

# refuge

LEADER WORKBOOK

Life has so often taught us to fend for ourselves—no one else is going to. But what if our self-protection and self-comfort were stopping us from connecting more deeply to God, friendship, and provisions? By learning to rely on him, we can receive his protection, hope, security, deliverance, approval, and comfort.

GOD IS MY **rest.**

GOD IS MY **hope.**

GOD IS MY **rock.**

GOD IS MY **comfort.**

GOD IS MY **refuge.**

*I recently heard another believer say, “God’s strength is realized upon the admission of my weakness.” I’ve found that to be so true.*

*We know God is awesome, strong, and contains within himself all the answers we need for life and its problems, but we don’t often know how to access his strength, comfort, and hope when we need it. Decades of living have trained us to fend for ourselves, be gritty, problem-solve, ask others for help, and be resourceful.*

*Yet the scriptures, as is often the case, teach us the opposite of what comes most naturally to us. Instead of trying to be strong, God invites us to be weak and learn to lean on him. When Paul was afflicted by the “thorn in his side,” the Lord reminded him, “my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in (your) weakness.” So, the question is not how to be strong but how to lean into God’s strength.*

*Each week, for the next six weeks, we want to investigate the various character traits of God that we find in Psalm 62:5-8, (This is Petra’s thematic scripture for the year 2023). God is my rest. My Hope. My Rock. My Honor. He is Faithful. And he is my Comfort. What do each of these mean, and how do we learn to live in God’s life and strength and not our own? As you go through the discussion times, feel free to follow the Holy Spirit, discern what people are learning or struggling with, change directions if you need to, minister to one another, and partner with Jesus as he shepherd’s his people.*

*I don’t know about you, but I’m excited to learn more about God and grow in this revolutionary way of walking in his abundant life.*

*Blessings!*

Small Groups Pastor Matt Kauffman



# GOD IS OUR REFUGE | Week 1

## ICE BREAKER [15 min]

- What has been one blessing you are thankful for during this last holiday season?
- If you had to describe your personal character in five verbs, what would they be? If your best friend had to describe your character in five words, would they use the same words?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS [60 min]

Read **Psalm 62** together as a group.

1. Make a list of all the words the psalmist uses to describe God. Take some time to discuss how each word and attribute is different from the others.
2. These words mostly describe how God functions—what he does. How do these action words depict an aspect of God's character—who he is?
3. Take some time to look at verses 3-4 and 9-10. How does the worshipper describe himself and others? What do we learn about ourselves and our need for God?
4. Quite often, we have to relearn how to rely on God. We are used to being self-sufficient and self-protective. What does it look like to learn how to receive God's provision and God's protection and to trust and rely on him; not provide that for myself?
5. Do you have an example from your life of a time you learned to lean into God; for him to be your rest, rock, fortress, salvation, or honor? What did that look like?
6. Read **Psalm 62** a second time. This time don't try to analyze it. The words communicate realities about God that are constantly flowing out of him and are still available today. Read through this passage slowly, meditating on it and pausing after the different descriptions of God. What gift of himself does he want to impart to you? Practice receiving his Spirit as a gift.



## **PERSONAL PRAYER** [10-15 min]

Break into prayer groups of 3-4 people. Share with each other one challenge you are facing in life. It could be spiritual, vocational, relational, financial, etc. Then have the other members select one of the phrases from this Psalm and pray and declare God's protection over you.

i.e., "I pray that financially you would *not be shaken*...but you would have a quiet confidence..."

## **Notes**

# GOD IS OUR REFUGE | Week 2

## WORSHIP [15 min]

Start your evening with a few songs of worship. Here are some suggested lyric videos you can find on YouTube.

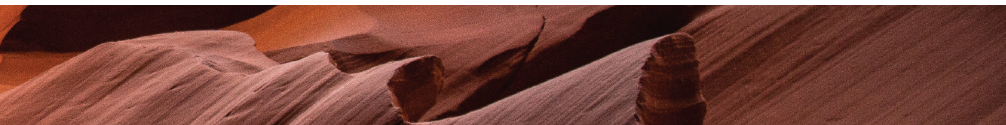
- *How Great Is Your Love* by Phil Wickham
- *Living Hope* by Phil Wickham

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS [60 min]

1. Describe a time when you've felt powerless or hopeless.
2. What's the difference between powerlessness and hopelessness?

### Read Psalm 33:16-22

- From these verses, do we learn anything specific about what hope is?
  - The Biblical author makes a case to say that we should not have vain or false hope in certain things. What are the vain hopes in the Psalmist's world? What do you think are the false hopes we should not trust in our world? Why are they false hopes?
  - In verses 18-22, what are we actually putting our hope in? And what is it about God's character that we can put our hope in?
  - So, if the command is given to "*put your hope in the Lord*," how do we apply that to our lives in the 21st century?
  - Based on verses 20-21, what actions do we need to take? And what actions does God take?
3. What situations look hopeless in our nation today? In our local community? Or maybe in your personal life? How do we practice the command "*put your hope in the Lord*" in any of these domains?



## **COMMUNAL PRAYER [10-15 min]**

Take some time to pray over our local community and our nation. Lift up those areas that look impossible or hopeless. Confess our need for God. And declare his goodness and his miraculous power over those areas that appear resistant to his truth and love. Pray that God would raise up prophets and truth-tellers and solutions to bring his Kingdom of light to the darkness. Pray in confidence that he is coming with hope. The answer may not come when you think it should, but it will come.

### ***Notes***

# GOD IS OUR REFUGE | Week 3

## ICE BREAKER [15 min]

- What makes you feel stressed out or depleted?
- What regenerates your strength and joy?

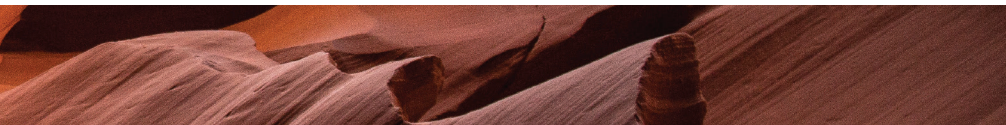
## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS [60 min]

So often, in faith, we mistakenly think we need to be strong and resilient; we need to have the solutions; we need to rise to face the challenge. That mentality inadvertently trains us to depend on our strengths and sufficiency.

### Read 2 Samuel 22:4-7, 17-19

1. In what ways do you notice David admitting his vulnerability and weakness? How do you think we can practice admitting our vulnerability to God and to one another?
2. Is there an area of your life that you've been able to admit, "I'm not very good at that," or "I need help with that"—even relationally or morally? Has that admission led to freedom or deeper dependence on others?
3. What prevents us from admitting our vulnerabilities and needs?
4. In what ways do you notice David, in his moment of need, reaching out to God?
5. What should it actually look like in your life to reach out to God and depend on him in your moment of need or crisis? How exactly do we draw strength from him in those moments?
6. What prevents us from connecting to God—especially in our moments of need? Which of these apply to you?
  - a. we fixate on the problem and become anxious and stressed
  - b. we're too busy with crisis management and solving the problem
  - c. we're too prideful to admit we have a problem or that we need help





- d. we're used to figuring it out ourselves because nobody will help me
  - e. we seek advice from everyone else and forget to consult the Lord
  - f. we are ashamed that maybe we created the problem
  - g. other
7. How should we practice leaning into God's strength *regularly*, and not just in our hour of crisis or need?
8. Take a few minutes of personal meditation and write down a few areas you'd like to learn to rely on God's strength.

## SCRIPTURE DECLARATIONS EXERCISE [10 min]

Take the last question you just discussed as a group and turn it into a meditative prayer exercise. Go around the group and have each person in the group read one of these scripture verses out loud, allowing ten to twenty seconds of meditation after each verse. As you hear the verses concentrate on the area of your life you'd like to learn to rely on the Lord's strength and focus on receiving strength from God's Spirit encountering you through his Word.

### **Deuteronomy 32:3-4**

*I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*

### **1 Samuel 2:2**

*There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.*

### **Psalms 95:1**

*Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;  
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.*

**Exodus 15:2**

*The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.  
He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.*

**Psalm 18:39**

*You armed me with strength for battle;  
you humbled my adversaries before me.*

**1 Samuel 22:2-3**

*The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in  
whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my  
stronghold, my refuge and my savior—from violent people you save me.*

**Isaiah 41:10**

*So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

**Psalm 59:16**

*But I will sing of your strength,  
in the morning I will sing of your love;  
for you are my fortress,  
my refuge in times of trouble.*

**Isaiah 12:2**

*Surely God is my salvation;  
I will trust and not be afraid.  
The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense;  
he has become my salvation.*

**Habakkuk 3:19**

*The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a  
deer; he enables me to tread on the heights.*

Others: **Psalm 9:9; Psalm 18:2; Psalm 2:12; Psalm 36:7; Psalm 46:1;  
Psalm 73:28; Psalm 91:4**

# **Notes**

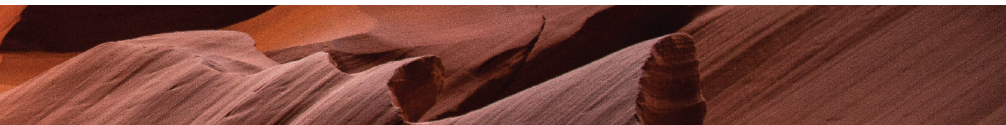
## FOR STARTERS [20 min]

In Western culture, we don't talk much about honor, but shame and honor are important ideas in the Bible and in much of the Far East and the Middle East today. In the Hebrew language, honor is the idea of being "lifted up," highly regarded, or prominent. Prominence may come from being wise, being wealthy, experiencing victory over your enemy, being virtuous, or achieving a good reputation. Prominence can only happen in community—in the eyes of others. Yet, there is also an emotional and spiritual aspect to honor and shame as well. Shame is to look down upon yourself or others—to be downcast.

- Have you ever been publicly honored or celebrated for something? Or held in prominent position?
- Nowadays in the United States, what are ways people are celebrated and praised in a way that is unhealthy, shallow, or self-interested?
- What are some ways our communities still praise people and honor people in a way that is healthy for the entire community?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS [60 min]

1. Sometimes topical studies are a helpful way to learn from the scriptures. Break into groups of four or five people. Have each group read through a column or two of scriptures and answer the questions below. Then come together in the big group, read your verses, and discuss what you discovered about honor.
  - a. What do we learn about honor?
  - b. Is honor a good thing?
  - c. What brings dishonor?
  - d. What does it mean to seek approval from God; and not seek honor in the eyes of others?
  - e. Is it ever appropriate to seek honor from other people?
  - f. Can you think of any Biblical criteria for being honored?



**Deuteronomy 26:19**

**Psalms 62:7**

**Isaiah 54:4**

**Psalms 145:14**

**Isaiah 43:4**

**Matthew 6:2**

**Deuteronomy 28:13**

**Ezra 9:6**

**Job 11:15**

**Job 22:26**

**Numbers 6:25**

**Jeremiah 3:17**

**Zephaniah 3:19**

**Luke 14:10**

**John 5:23**

2. Revelation 5:13 says, *“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”*
  - What does it mean that God is honorable and that all will honor him?
3. It’s amazing God doesn’t just call us sinners and merely tolerate us, rescuing us out of his pity. Rather, the Bible depicts that it was the joy of the Father that he paid for us and that his intention is to honor us and deliver us into his abundant life, into greater levels of freedom, joy, power, honor, and purpose. Literally, he is lifting us up to equal status with himself. (Ephesians 2:10; John 16:14-15; Hebrews 12:2; Colossians 1:19-22; Romans 8:15; John 14:20). God is reshaping our own view of ourselves so that we would see we are held in high regard.
  - Why is it so difficult to believe God holds “me” in high regard?
  - What are the hidden lies we may still believe about ourselves that steal the dignity and honor that God lavishes on us?
  - Why is it important that we live out of God’s view of ourselves instead of our shame? How does shame manipulate us to act in unhealthy ways (i.e., secrecy)?

## **PRACTICE HONORING EACH OTHER [30 min]**

If we strive to be a community of honesty then it is important that we not only confront one another when we miss the mark, but that we also tell each other the honorable things we see in one another.

### **The Seat of Honor**

Select one person to be the recipient of positive feedback from the rest of the group. Then allow everyone to verbally honor that person. Here are some helpful phrases to get you started:

- “What I really appreciate about Joe is...”
- “What I’ve noticed about Jane’s character is...”
- “Joe is really good at...”
- “What makes Jane special is...”

After everyone has had a chance to honor that person you can chose the next person.

# **Notes**

# GOD IS OUR REFUGE | Week 5

## ICE BREAKER [15 min]

Have you ever had an unreliable car, an unreliable friend, or an unreliable co-worker? Describe the emotions you experienced with the lack of consistency and how you might've compensated for their inadequacy.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS [60 min]

Read the following scriptures and answer these questions.

1. What do we learn about God's reliability and faithfulness?
2. In what ways does he express his faithfulness?
3. What does his faithfulness require of us?
4. What does it mean to "trust" in the Lord? How do we grow to depend on his faithfulness and not lean on our own sufficiency?

**Exodus 34:6-7**

**Deuteronomy 7:9**

**Deuteronomy 32:4**

**Psalms 145:13**

**Psalms 25:10**

**Numbers 20:12**

**Joshua 24:14**

**Psalms 33:4**

**Psalms 86:11**

**Psalms 96:13**

**Lamentations 3:22-23**

**Isaiah 42:3**

**Psalms 20:7**

**Psalms 28:7**

## MEDITATION TIME [20 min]

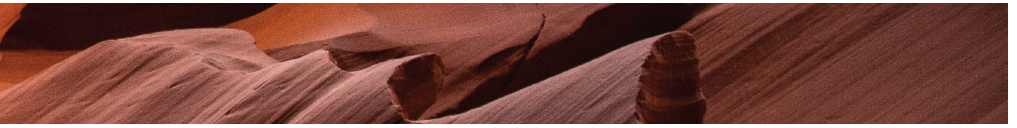
What is a situation in which you are facing adversity, difficulty, or need? Or think of an area you want to grow in your character or relationships.

After having everyone focus on an area of need, take a few minutes to meditatively read five or six of these verses out loud again, this time not to analyze them but to receive the presence and power of the Lord through them. Take your time, giving room for silence and reflection. What does it mean to invite God's faithfulness into the area of your need?

Finish your time with a short discussion.

- Did you sense the Lord moving in any particular way during the meditation? Is the Lord doing anything in particular in your mind and heart?





- How can you apply what you are learning to your daily and weekly life?

## ***Notes***

# GOD IS OUR REFUGE | Week 6

## WORSHIP & TESTIMONY [15 min]

Open your evening with a worship song. Here's a suggestion:

- *Holy Forever* by Christ Tomlin

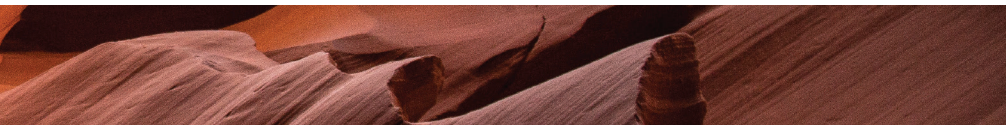
Does anyone have a testimony of how they've seen God at work in the lives of people around them?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS [60 min]

1. What is an attribute of God you feel like you've understood and appreciated yourself?
2. Is there a facet of God's character you've been growing in over these last six weeks or you feel like you're encountering in a new way?

### Read Psalm 77

3. Psalm 62:8 says to pour out our hearts to the Lord. What does it mean to "pour out our hearts to him," and how do we see the Psalmist doing that in Psalm 77?
4. What situation does it appear the Psalmist is struggling through? (We especially see the struggle in verses 7-9).
5. How does the Psalmist resolve to find comfort? What does he declare in verse 10?
6. Read Psalm 34:18. Why is it that sometimes God is intimately near to the broken-hearted, but then, as in Psalm 77, he seems far away from the pilgrim?
7. Have you experienced seasons when the Lord has comforted you? How do we receive his comfort?
8. Have you experienced seasons when the Lord was far away? How did you walk faithfully through those seasons of his distance?



9. What prevents us from turning to the Lord for comfort or receiving comfort from him in our hour of need?
  
10. How do we practice pouring out our hearts to the Lord earnestly and regularly?

## **PRAYER** [20 min]

- In smaller groups of 3-4 people, take some time to pray for each other. Pray for your families, life purpose, growth in the Lord, opportunities to share Jesus with others, friendships, etc.

## **Notes**