



LEADER'S NOTES

The Opportunity of Adversity

- **The first question** encourages your group to discuss adversity, which is the focus of our sermon series. It also emphasizes the need to develop skills for handling adversity.
 - Some of those skills might include developing a deeper reservoir of patience, reframing, and the ability to look at a hardship from several different angles. Then, eventually, seeing how it could lead to good things, and learning how to release the frustration of adversity to God. This is by drawing on his strength in your moments of weakness.
- **The second question** allows your group some time in the scripture. Don't rush this question, but let the scripture speak to your group.
- **Question three** focuses on the main theme of the sermon and the discussion questions, emphasizing pouring out our souls to God. This question has two parts:
 - The first asks what it means to pour out your soul to God. You might want to prepare a phrase beforehand to share with the group, but you should also allow them to find their own words for this biblical idea.
 - The second part presents my definition and invites them to share a time when they poured out their souls to God. You may want to share first or encourage someone from the group who might give a good example for others.

- **Question four** presents three negative alternatives to pouring out your soul to God:
 1. Deny it and suppress your feelings.
 2. Allow frustration from adversity to build up into anger and explode on innocent family members, coworkers, and bystanders.
 3. Seek to numb it, dulling the stress and frustration of adversity.
 - The question then asks, "*Of the options listed, which are you most likely to choose if you don't pour out your soul to God?*"
 - This question has great potential to reveal negative patterns and help your group members choose to pour out their souls to God. Take your time with it.

- **Question five** discusses three examples from scripture showing how we pour out our souls to God:
 - *First*, we acknowledge our pain to God, praying through how the stress and frustration of adversity cause pain in our lives.
 - *Second*, we must pray from the depths of our heart—this is deep prayer, holding nothing back.
 - *Lastly*, as we get it all out, our prayer turns to thanksgiving and worship. We must end with gratitude, trusting God to take our burdens and move powerfully on our behalf.
 - Talk through these three things as a group. You might ask which of these is most difficult and which is more natural. Also, stress the importance of worship and thanksgiving.