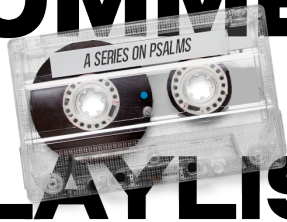


SUMMER PLAYLIST



Week 4

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

There are four crucial components for a group to maintain its health: Word, prayer, relationships, and reaching out. In this guide, you will study the biblical passage in three steps: observation, interpretation, and application. As the group leader, you are free to use any part of this guide that can assist you in achieving this goal.

CONNECT

- High/Low/Buffalo: Share something good, something bad, and something silly from your past week.
- What's the most physically taxing thing you've ever done?

INTRODUCTION

As we journey through the Psalms and experience the full range of human emotions, we now arrive at a psalm of lament. Psalm 88 is one of the rare occurrences where a psalmist doesn't move through lament into praise. This shows us that God invites us to pour out our hearts in the moments of deepest pain and grief. While the Psalms as a whole ultimately culminate in highest praise, at no point does the book deny the reality of pain and grief.

OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATION

Read: Psalm 88

Discuss:

- Before reading the below questions, spend some time inviting your group to make observations about the Psalm. What stands out? What words or phrases seem important?
- Count how many times the psalmist addresses God directly ("O LORD," "you," etc.). What does this reveal about who he's speaking to even in his despair?
- Name the images that the psalmist uses to describe his pain. Who does he seem to blame for the situation he is in?
- Why might it matter that this is one of the only psalms with no turn toward praise or resolution? What might God be communicating by including it in Scripture unedited?

APPLICATION

- The psalmist doesn't stop talking to God even in despair. Where do you tend to go silent with God instead of speaking to him? What keeps you from bringing your bleakest thoughts to him directly?
- Who in your life is currently in a "Psalm 88 season" – pain with no praise in sight? How might this psalm change how you comfort them?
- What would it look like this week to bring one specific area of pain to God in raw, unresolved honesty, without pressuring yourself to end on a hopeful note?

PRAYER

Break into groups of 2-3. Encourage each person to think of a hard situation in their lives, and to spend time verbalizing their feelings to God about it. Reflect on what that experience is like.