



## Leader's Guide

# I Can't Catch a Break

*Romans 5:3-5, James 1:2-4, Matthew 11:28-30 | Pastor Dave Bennett | July 5, 2026*

### Session Overview

We are starting a new sermon series titled, "Slap a Promise on It," which will be talking about how we can depend on the promises from God as we go through life. This week, we talked about going through trials and how the Lord uses these to strengthen us while also promising to share the burdens of hardship with us. In our discussion today, we will be talking about those hardships and the specific lessons we have been taught throughout our lives.

### Session Flow (60-75 minutes)

#### **Welcome and Icebreaker (10 minutes)**

While the phrase, "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger" is not completely true, what was a time when you felt that a tough situation made you grow as a person?

Purpose: To get the group thinking about trials and hardships they have experienced and re-frame them to understand how God uses hardship for our good.

#### **Scripture Reading**

Read Romans 5:3-5, James 1:2-4, and Matthew 11:28-30 aloud together.

#### **Leader Coaching Sidebar**

- Remember that talking about hardship and the trials we face can bring up many different emotions.
- Create an environment where everyone feels comfortable to share their past trials. Assure everyone that we do not judge someone's past, or even their present.
- Keep the focus on God and what he has done through our trials. We can easily slip into complaining about a situation when that's not our goal.

## **Discussion (40-50 minutes)**

- 1. What are your initial thoughts when you hear the word “perseverance”? What does perseverance mean to you right now?**

*Leader Note: Is there a situation they are going through that affects one’s perspective on perseverance? What has perseverance meant in the past?*

- 2. What is the difference between trials and temptations that we talked about in the sermon on Sunday?**

*Leader Note: If the group needs help remembering, trials are for our development but temptations are for our destruction.*

- 3. What was a trial that you experienced that made you feel like the walls were closing in and what brought you out of it?**

*Leader Note: Think about the people around you, any encouragement from others and God, or the mindset you had as you navigated that time in your life.*

- 4. Look back at the trial you just talked about. How did you see God’s faithfulness in the end?**

*Leader Note: What was God doing throughout the situation? What did He teach you after the situation?*

- 5. In the sermon, we heard, “God has not wasted a single difficulty in your life.” What does that statement make you think or feel?**

*Leader Note: If the group needs help remembering, trials are for our development but temptations are for our destruction.*

- 6. How does knowing that our trials are used for a purpose change your perspective on the hardship we face?**

*Leader Note: Reflect on how it changes the meaning of the trials we go through. We may have gone through suffering, but that suffering lead to growth, which gives it purpose.*

- 7. What is something you learned in a previous trial that could help you to persevere through a trial you are going through now or will go through in the future?**

*Leader Note: We just discussed that our suffering is given purpose. Now, let’s reflect on what that purpose may be. This will differ for each individual.*

- 8. What is a reminder you have that encourages you to choose pure joy in the midst of trials?**

*Leader Note: Think of moments where you grew, quotes from a friend or mentor, or Bible verses that can help you get through the hard moments.*

- 9. The Enemy tries to use our trials to turn us against God. How have you witnessed the Enemy trying to reshape ?**

*Leader Note: Try to connect times where you may have been upset with God or bitter towards God because of a situation and point out how that may have been Satan at work.*

- 10. What is a burden that you have been trying to carry alone? What does it mean to bring that burden to God?**

*Leader Note: Trying to let others step in to help can be tough. Fully letting God take control can be just as hard. How can we give up control and let God share the burden with us?*

### ***Application and Prayer (10-15 minutes)***

We learned in the sermon this week that in trials, we should look back to see what God has already done, stay present and be joyful in the suffering, and look ahead to the ways God will care for us throughout the rest of our lives. Throughout the sermon and the discussion today, how has your perspective on trials changed? What hope do you have going forward?

### **Closing Prayer Suggestion**

God, thank you for being the one that gives purposes to the trials we face in our lives. We know that hardship is guaranteed in life, and though you don't cause them, you give our suffering new purpose as it shapes us into the person you want us to be. Thank you for wanting to share our burdens and help us to allow you to do it. When we are in the midst of suffering, we ask that you show yourself, reminding us of what you have done in the past and what you will do in our future. In your name, we lift up our prayers, amen.