

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Psalm 40...

This psalm occurs during a very turbulent time in David's life and kingship. He is in the middle of facing the consequences for his sin of adultery with Bathsheba. In 2 Samuel 12:10 Nathan the prophet warned him that the sword would never depart from his house. It was not long after he began to experience the heartbreaks of rape, fratricide, treachery, rebellion, seizure of David's concubines, and civil war. This is definitely the low point in David's life. It's during this time that David in all likelihood pens this psalm. While surrounded by enemies who are seeking to kill him David cries out and ask the Lord to deliver him as he had done in the past.

Study the Text...

Thanksgiving for Past Deliverance

While in the midst of great difficulty David's thoughts turn to previous times of trouble in which God heard his cry and delivered him. These times of deliverance have reinforced the truth for David that "the man who makes the Lord his trust" is blessed. Read Psalm 40:1-5

- What two images does David use to describe his time of great difficulty? [see verse 2; the only other two times these images are used are in Jeremiah 38:6 and Psalm 69:1-2]
- What do these two images communicate about David's situation and what he was experiencing?
- In light of such dire circumstances, how did David respond? (v. 1)
- David responded to his situation by "crying" out to the Lord? What does this communicate about David's situation? [also note Psalm 6:6; 56:8]
- What image does David use to describe how God delivered in times of trouble? (v. 2) How is this image significantly different from the image he used to describe his life prior to being delivered?
- What was David's response to being delivered? (v. 3, 5; also v. 9, 10)
- Who does David say put a new song in his mouth? Why is this significant?
- What type of song did God put in David's mouth? What does this mean?
- These verses reveal that God had two motivations for delivering David out of his troubles. What are they? [(1) desire for David to be delivered; (2) desire for Himself to be praised] Are these motivations surprising? Do you believe it is right or fair for God to hold both motivations? Why are both of these motivations good for those who have been delivered?

Group Discussion...

- When faced with great trouble, what did David first reflect on? Do you find yourself following David's example? Why or why not?
- Do you find it difficult to wait on the Lord as David did?
- In what areas of life are you currently waiting on the Lord?
- Has there been a time in your life in which you cried out to the Lord and he delivered you from a troubling situation? "Proclaim and tell" of God's wondrous deeds to those in your group. [verses 1-3 are also a beautiful picture of what Christ has done for those who have trusted in him, therefore you may want to ask each person in your group to share their testimony of deliverance from spiritual death to spiritual life]
- David said at the time of his deliverance that God put a new song in his mouth. Do you believe singing is an important part of the Christian life? Why or why not?
- How did those who witnessed God's deliverance of David respond? What does this teach us? What implications does this have on how we relate to unbelievers?

Study the Text...

Dedication for Present Obedience

David responded to God's gracious act of deliverance by dedicating himself to the Lord. He recalled that God preferred his obedience to his sacrifices. David responded to this truth in verse 6 by yielding his life to do God's will. He presented himself willingly to the Lord and expressed his desire to do the will of God. These verses present a marvelous example of what is involved in dedicating oneself to God's will in accordance with His Word. Read Psalm 40:6-8

- What do these verses teach us about the OT sacrificial system? (also note Psalm 50:8-15; 51:16-19; Proverbs 14:9; Isaiah 1:11-17)
- What does David mean when he said that "you have given me an open ear"?
- The author of Hebrews uses these verses in reference to Christ in Hebrews 10:5-7. Please turn to Hebrews and read these verses. How do these verses apply to Christ according to the context of Hebrews 10?

Group Discussion. . .

- What was David's approach to God's will? Can this be said of you? How would you describe your approach to God's will?
- What did David do with God's law? How about you? What's your daily practice and use of God's word? In what ways can you hide it in your heart?
- What's the relationship David makes between delighting in God's will and putting his law in his heart? What are the implications of this for our lives?

Study the Text...

Petition for Present Deliverance

The tone of the psalm changes dramatically here to one of urgent prayer. David begins his prayer by asking the Lord to continue His mercy, steadfast love and faithfulness because of the many troubles and sins that surround him. The troubles he was experiencing were the consequences of his many sins (cf. Psalm 25:17-18; 38:2-14). His prayer became more specific in verses 13-16 as he asked for a quick deliverance from his troubles. He believed that the Lord, in rescuing him, should put to shame all those who sought to take his life and bring him ruin. In doing so the righteous would be encouraged to rejoice and praise the Lord. These would be the effects of God's answer to his prayer. Read Psalm 40:11-17.

- Why is David so certain in verse 11 that the Lord will not restrain His mercy from him?
- What part do verses 1-10 play in David's certainty in verse 11?
- What "iniquities" is David likely referring to in verse 12?
- What were the consequences of David's iniquities?
- What was David's prayer against his enemies?
- What are your initial thoughts about David's attitude toward his enemies? Is David just in having such an attitude?

Group Discussion...

- What do we learn about sin and its consequences in these verses? Have you experienced this truth in your life? If so, please share with the group.
- How do these verses give us a clear picture of our ultimate deliverance in Christ? (note verses 16-17)
- How many times is the word "Lord" used in this passage? In light of the context why is this important? In light of his current situation what does this reveal about David?
- How many verses in the psalm speak about praising God and telling of the "glad news of deliverance in the great congregation"? Spend the remaining portion of your time together praising God for the mercy He has lavished on you in salvation.