

## 2026-04-01 Small Group Guide

### Small Group Guide: Contending with God

Based on Job 40 and Colossians 1-2

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin by asking God to humble your hearts and open your minds to His Word. Pray that the Holy Spirit would reveal areas where you may be contending with God rather than surrendering to Him.

Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

Question: Have you ever had a moment when you suddenly realized how much bigger or more powerful something was than you initially thought? Share that experience.

Key Scripture Passages

Job 40:1-9 - God's challenge to Job

Colossians 1:24-29 - Paul's perspective on suffering

Colossians 2:1-6 - The riches found in Christ

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Sermon

The Passion Week Context

The pastor suggested Jesus may have been betrayed on Wednesday night rather than Friday. Whether or not you agree, what does it mean to you that Jesus knew exactly what was coming and still chose to go through with it?

Job's Humbling

Read Job 40:3-5. What caused Job to put his hand over his mouth and stop speaking? What does this teach us about encountering God's presence?

## The MMA Analogy

The pastor shared a story about someone who was all show but got knocked out with one punch. How does this illustrate what it means to "contend with God"? In what ways do we do this without realizing it?

Going Deeper

## Contending vs. Surrendering

What's the difference between contending with God and contending for God?

Read Jude 1:3. What does it mean to "contend for the faith"?

## Our Hidden Complaints

The pastor said we often tell God what we think He should have done or how things are unfair. Can you identify an area in your life where you've been subtly accusing God of being unfair or not doing things right?

## The Greatness We Miss

Job 40:9-14 contains God's sarcastic challenge: "Adorn yourself with splendor...clothe yourself in honor and majesty." Why do we so easily forget how small we are and how great God is?

Key Takeaways

From the Sermon

We will all give an account - Just as God questioned Job, we will stand before Christ and give an account of our lives (Romans 14:12, 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Suffering has purpose - Paul rejoiced in his sufferings and saw them as participating in Christ's afflictions (Colossians 1:24). This is counter to American Christianity's comfort-focused message.

Complete in Christ - Being "perfect" in Christ means being complete in Him—not partially committed, but 24/7, all-in (Colossians 1:28).

The value of God's Word - Paul used words like "riches," "treasures," and "wealth" to describe knowing Christ and understanding His Word. Do we value it that highly?

We need each other - We don't grow well in isolation. The church is designed to admonish, teach, and encourage one another toward Christlikeness.

Reflection Questions (Choose 2-3)

Personal Inventory

On a scale of 1-10, how much do you truly value knowing Christ more deeply? What evidence in your life supports that rating?

The Surrender Question

Complete this sentence: "The area of my life I most struggle to surrender to God is \_\_\_\_\_." Why is that area so hard?

Suffering Perspective

How does your view of suffering compare to Paul's in Colossians 1:24? What would need to change in your thinking to see suffering as Paul did?

Community Commitment

Are you truly engaged in the body of Christ, or are you trying to live the Christian life solo? What's one practical step you could take to be more connected?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge (Choose One or More)

### Option 1: The Humility Exercise

Each day this week, spend 5 minutes reading a passage about God's greatness (suggestions: Job 38-41, Psalm 8, Psalm 104, Isaiah 40). After reading, simply sit in silence and let God be God. Don't ask for anything—just acknowledge His majesty.

### Option 2: The Gratitude Shift

Identify one situation in your life that you've been complaining about or questioning God over. Each day, write down one way God might be working in that situation for His glory or your growth.

### Option 3: The Word Treasure Hunt

Commit to reading one chapter of Colossians each day this week (there are only 4 chapters). Write down every reference to "riches," "treasures," "fullness," or "complete." Ask God to show you what you're missing.

### Option 4: The Community Connection

If you're not in a small group or don't have close Christian friendships, reach out to someone this week to start building that relationship. Invite them for coffee, a meal, or a walk.

### Option 5: The Admonishment Challenge

Paul talks about admonishing and teaching one another. Pray for God to show you someone who needs encouragement in their walk with Christ. Reach out to them with a call, text, or visit—not to judge, but to encourage.

Group Prayer Time (15-20 minutes)

Prayer Prompts:

Confession - Confess areas where you've been contending with God rather than trusting Him.

Surrender - Pray for grace to surrender every area of your life to Christ's lordship.

Perspective - Ask God to help you see suffering and trials through His eyes, not your own.

Unity - Pray for your church to be united in love and growing in complete understanding of Christ.

Specific Needs - Share and pray for specific situations where group members are struggling to trust God.

Closing Thought

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him." - Colossians 2:6

The Christian life isn't just about a moment of salvation—it's about continuing, persevering, growing, and deepening your walk with Christ every single day. Don't settle for spiritual mediocrity when the riches of knowing Christ are available to you.

For Next Week

Read Job 41-42 (the conclusion of Job's story)

Reflect on how Job's story ends and what that teaches us about God's character

Come prepared to share one way you saw God's faithfulness this week

Leader Note: Be sensitive to the fact that some in your group may be going through genuine suffering. Create a safe space for honest questions and doubts, while gently pointing people back to God's character and faithfulness. This is a heavy topic—balance truth with grace.