



## Made For More Community Sep 23: One in Our Struggles

**Series Summary:** Groups begin with time to connect. We're not just here to sit in a circle. We're here to know others and be known by others. Second, we open our Bibles together. We don't just study information. We want to know and live the Word of God. Third, we open our hands to serve and care for one another. In a small group, everyone matters, and everyone contributes. There is no such thing as a spectator.

**Big Idea:** We tend to have a feeling that we are to handle our struggles on our own. However, scripture says otherwise. How can we as a small group support one another through our struggles in Godly ways?

**Schedule:**

- Video teaching
- Small group

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## VIDEO TEACHING

**Series Lead in:** Over the course of this series, we have been going over the content of our small groups, and how we can best grow as a group of believers.

**Tonight:** We are going to go over the part of community that so many Christians fall short at– How do we rely on each other, and how do we support each other, when we face struggles?

JESUS DISPROVES A GREAT LIE

**Context:** Jesus knows that he is about to be arrested and crucified. He tells his closest disciples to join him in the garden of Gethsemane, and to keep watch in his hour of need.

**Matthew 26:36-38** Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

**Theological Truth:** Jesus does not NEED anyone, but rather he chooses to want his creation with him. This example shows the relational value between Jesus and his creation.

However, there is a great detail hidden here that we will oftentimes miss...mainly because we're busy listening to a lie.

- That lie is "I can handle this on my own", or "I don't need anyone else's help"
- Sometimes the lie we believe is "no one understands what I'm going through". Even if that may be true, consider this– none of the disciples had experience with crucifixion, and yet Jesus asked them to be by his side.

All in all, Jesus chose the three that were the closest with him to be by his side in support during a very difficult time. What we see next is another key aspect of us dealing with struggles...

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LORD

**Key Truth:** Yes, we need community support. People to love and support us. However, they were never meant to "fix" us or our problems. And vice versa– we can't fix someone else. Jesus knew this, yet he still wanted people by his side. But look at his next actions...

**Matthew 26:39** Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Jesus takes his struggles to the greatest source who can do something about it. He takes it to God in prayer. The seasons in life where we go through hardships or struggles need to involve both parties– both God and people.

- AKA, the One who can truly heal, and those who walk by our side through it.
- But what exactly does this look like on our part?

## WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

This can typically look a couple of ways: Spiritual struggle, and personal problems.

### **For Spiritual Struggles**

**Galatians 6:1-2** Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

- Restore that person gently
- Watch yourself, so you don't fall into the same temptation as them.
- Carry each other's burdens; support one another, be in each other's corner.

### **For Personal Issues**

**Hebrews 10:24-25** And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- Love and encourage that person, reminding them of God's truths
- Don't give up meeting with one another; we're not meant to do life alone!

**Transition to Groups:** We are going to discuss how we can best implement these practices and wisdoms as a group, but also on a personal level.

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## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

**Get Them Talking:** Have you ever had someone be there for you during a time of struggles or hardship? How did that help you personally or spiritually?

**Based on the video message, why is it irresponsible of us to try and handle hardships or struggles on our own?**

**Leader Note:** Simply put, God gave us brothers and sisters in Christ for a reason. Yes, we were made to be in community with God, but also made to be in community with each other as well. This includes the good times and the bad.

## Read Galatians 6:1-3 together as a group

**Vs 1: What does it look like to restore someone gently? What words or actions go into gentleness?**

**Leader Note:** I would encourage the idea that loving someone despite their sin does not mean that we ignore or validate their sin issues. We should walk them through it, remind them of Jesus's sacrifice to defeat sin, and that we are not called to walk in sin anymore with a gentle and loving tone. 'Gentle' does not mean affirming sin, or turning a blind eye to it, as so many people get this wrong.

**Vs 2: How would you put "carrying each other's burdens" into your own words?**

**How is carrying each other's burdens different from trying to "fix" them?**

**Leader Note:** We were never called to fix other people. On the flip side, we shouldn't expect others to try and fix us when we're hurting. Jesus is the ultimate source of peace, joy, and restoration. However, praying with the other person, giving them sound advice, and reminding them of God's truth could very well lead them in the right direction.

**A great way to support a brother or sister is to pray with them. What's the difference between praying FOR someone, and praying WITH them?**

## HOW TO SEEK OUT THESE PEOPLE

**Proverbs 17:17** A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.

**What should you look for when seeking out someone to lean on during a time of difficulty? What are the non-negotiable characteristics?**

**Leader note:** Not everyone who calls themselves a Christian is a good option to open up to or lean on. This is why we must evaluate those in our lives to see if they are a trustworthy option. Here are some non-negotiable qualities worth mentioning: Must follow Jesus daily, trustworthy (they have earned my trust), patient, slow to anger, they process before they act, and I know that they genuinely care about me and love me...just to name a few.

**Challenge/wrap-up:** If you know that someone in your life is going through a tough time, or maybe it's someone in the group, don't just pray for them. Make time to pray WITH them intentionally.