

Small Group Study Guide

Trusting God in Tough Times

9/27-10/3

**SURVIVING
TOUGH
ECONOMIC
TIMES**



BEGIN IN PRAYER

OPEN

- What is your favorite snack food?
- How do you usually react to being hungry? Has there ever been a time when you experienced real hunger?
- As a group respond to these sayings:
 - “You cannot reason with a hungry belly, since it has no ears.” -Greek proverb*
 - “It is not the horse that draws the cart, but the oats.” -Russian proverb*
 - “A hungry man is not a free man.” -Adlai Stevenson*
- What would be your thoughts and feelings if you only had enough food for today, and didn't know if you would be able to eat tomorrow?

READ: I Kings 17:7-24

LESSON ① God Expects Every Christ Follower to Participate

- What does 2 Corinthians 8:2 teach us about surviving tough economic times (our own and others)?
- What does it mean that God “expects” us to participate and get involved in the hardships of others?

Authur Stainback once said, “The value of compassion cannot be over-emphasized. Anyone can criticize. It takes a true believer to be compassionate. No greater burden can be borne by an individual than to know no one cares or understands.”

- What does it mean for “Christ followers” to have compassion and understanding for others?
- What were some things Pastor John highlighted from the story of Elijah and the widow that teach us about getting involved in the hardships of others?

LESSON ② We Must Give to God First

Re-read I Kings 17:13.

- If you were the widow in this story what would you be thinking and feeling? Would you be afraid?

Read Exodus 23:16 and Proverbs 3:9-10

- What are some lessons that this passage and Pastor John's sermon teach us about putting God first in our lives (and finances)?

LESSON ③ If We Honor God, He will Take Care of Us... Especially During Tough Times

Re-read I Kings 17:15

- The widow and her son were down to their last meal when God intervened in their lives. When was a time you felt like you had reached the end of your rope? What happened?
- On a scale of 1 (almost empty) to 10 (overflowing), where do you feel your "oil supply" (God's blessing) is at in your life right now?

There is a legend about a beggar who encounters a rich king and he asked the rich king to give him something. And the king said, you give me something first. And the beggar reached into his pocket, where he had a pocket full of grain, but that's all he had for his next meal...and he fingered until he got the smallest grain that he could find and he took it out and gave it to the king. Then the king reached in his purse and took out a gold nugget, the exact same size as that kernel of grain and gave it to the beggar who spent the rest of his life regretting that he didn't give all that he had to the king.

Read Phipprians 4:19 and Luke 6:38. What do these promises of God mean to us?

Now read 2 Corinthians 9:6. What does this passage teach us?

LESSON ④ Giving Sacrificially Today May Not Keep You from Troubles Tomorrow

- What's the sickest you remember being as a kid?

Re-read I Kings 17:17-22

- After what God had done for the widow through Elijah, why did she turn on him when her son died?
 - Was she just lashing out because of her grief?
 - Was her faith in Elijah, and not in God?
- What does it mean that we must live by faith? How do you deal with circumstances beyond your control?
- What does this passage teach us about trusting God in tough times?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

- How can your group pray for each other, especially those facing tough economic times?