

Overwhelmed

Life Group Leaders Guide

Objective

This guide contains the information and questions you will need to lead a life group study during our current sermon series. Our aim is to spark Spirit-led, Bible-centered conversations that anyone can participate in regardless of how biblically literate they may or may not be. **The win** that we want you to experience is when your group members **connect** more closely with each other and with God so that they are encouraged to move forward in living out their faith.

Directions

The *Purpose* and *Move* sections are for the leader to read to the group to provide clarity. **Do not feel pressured to cover all the questions.** Decide which ones may work best for your group. You will see brief notes interspersed between groups of questions to help give the group context for their answers. The *Notes and Commentary* section (when included) is optional reading for the leader to get background information and better understanding of the passages before leading the discussion.

Series Overview

So many of us are overwhelmed by things that keep us from living the life God wants for us. We struggle with things like depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, addiction and stress. But through the power of the Spirit and with help from others, we can tear down these strongholds. It requires the hard work of reframing our thoughts and shifting our behaviors, but we can be free!

Overwhelmed Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic
1	7/21/19	Depression, Anxiety, & Suicidal Thoughts
2	7/28/19	Addiction
3	8/4/19	(SOCIALS)

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

Depression, Anxiety, & Suicidal Thoughts

The Big Idea

It's okay to not be okay, but it's not okay to stay that way.

Flow of Study

Icebreaker (or use this question in move 1): Several recent studies have shown that depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts are significantly on the rise in today's teens and young adults compared to previous generations. What are some factors that you imagine might be contributing to this phenomenon?

Note to leader: See resources under Notes And Commentary for more info on this.

Move #1: Let's begin the discussion with some questions unpacking Sunday's sermon.

1. What stood out most to you from the message this weekend about Elijah's battle with depression?

Move #2: Let's look at an excerpt from the Book of Job, in which this godly man named Job, who over time had lost almost everything that he loved and valued, vents some dark and heavy emotions to his friends.

Read Job 3:11-16, 20-26 (NIV)

11 "Why did I not perish at birth,
and die as I came from the womb?
12 Why were there knees to receive me
and breasts that I might be nursed?
13 For now I would be lying down in peace;
I would be asleep and at rest
14 with kings and rulers of the earth,
who built for themselves places now lying in ruins,
15 with princes who had gold,
who filled their houses with silver.
16 Or why was I not hidden away in the ground like a stillborn child,
like an infant who never saw the light of day?
...
20 "Why is light given to those in misery,
and life to the bitter of soul,
21 to those who long for death that does not come,
who search for it more than for hidden treasure,
22 who are filled with gladness
and rejoice when they reach the grave?
23 Why is life given to a man
whose way is hidden,
whom God has hedged in?

24 For sighing has become my daily food;
my groans pour out like water.

25 What I feared has come upon me;
what I dreaded has happened to me.

26 I have no peace, no quietness;
I have no rest, but only turmoil.”

2. Clearly, in Scripture we see some cases where even people with a strong and mature faith like Job suffered through seasons of deep depression and anxiety. Why is that?
3. Go back and skim over the text again. If you have experienced anything similar to the anxious or despairing thoughts and feelings that Job expressed, would you mind sharing a little about that?
4. As Job’s story continues, his friends shamed him for his feelings. If you or someone close to you felt shame over a struggle with depression, anxiety or suicidal thoughts, how did you (or they) overcome that shame to begin to heal?

Move #3: Now let’s turn to a psalm that touches on the struggle of depression and anxiety and presents a response of faith.

Read Psalm 42 (NIV)

1 As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.

2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?

3 My tears have been my food
day and night,

while people say to me all day long,
“Where is your God?”

4 These things I remember
as I pour out my soul:

how I used to go to the house of God
under the protection of the Mighty One
with shouts of joy and praise
among the festive throng.

5 Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.

6 My soul is downcast within me;
therefore I will remember you
from the land of the Jordan,
the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.

7 Deep calls to deep
in the roar of your waterfalls;
all your waves and breakers

have swept over me.

8 By day the Lord directs his love,
at night his song is with me—
a prayer to the God of my life.

9 I say to God my Rock,
“Why have you forgotten me?

Why must I go about mourning,
oppressed by the enemy?”

10 My bones suffer mortal agony
as my foes taunt me,
saying to me all day long,
“Where is your God?”

11 Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.

5. What is the recurring question that the poet asks himself (verses 5, 11)?
6. How does that question reflect the struggle that depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts present, especially to someone who knows God?
7. Depression and anxiety greatly affect our ability to experience and enjoy God’s presence (see especially verses 1-4). How should we respond when God feels absent in spite of our attempts to worship and pray?
8. Re-read verse 7. If you’ve ever walked out into the surf on the coast, you may have experienced what it feels like to be plowed over by a big, surging wave. Can you describe it in detail? How does that compare with being overtaken by deep depression or extreme anxiety?
9. Re-read verse 10. Doctors attest to the fact that depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts can adversely affect our physical health. What does that say about the wisdom of getting medical help?
10. Verse 8 describes how God intentionally directs his love to us even when we are feeling down and forgotten by him. What is a way that you have seen his love in a time like that?
11. Both times that the poet asks himself why he is so down, how does he answer himself (verse 5, 11)? How is the psalmist’s conclusion critical to getting through depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts?

Next Steps: The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum farther.

1. It's okay to not be okay, but it's not okay to stay that way. Don't struggle alone. If you're dealing with these things, please let us pray over you. (Gather around, lay hands on and pray in faith.)

2. If someone in your group is struggling with significant or persistent depression, anxiety or suicidal thoughts, encourage them to also seek out help from their doctor and the Point Care Center. Medication and counseling are often extremely helpful and needed in treating these problems.
3. Continue to dialog about your struggles in a Core Group. If you do not have one, talk to your leader to see about joining one.

Prayer: End your study with a time of praying with and for each other. Take requests, but be sure to pray also about what you've discussed today.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links to related articles based on the passages of this study. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

Blog article by Christian pastor and author Carey Nieuwhof:

<https://careynieuwhof.com/leadership-and-suicide-when-ending-it-seems-like-the-only-way-out/>

News article:

<https://www.lohud.com/story/news/2019/05/05/teen-and-youth-suicide-rates-new-york-new-jersey-climb/3553626002/>

Time Magazine article:

<http://time.com/5550803/depression-suicide-rates-youth/>

Report in scholarly journal referenced in above articles:

<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/abn-abn0000410.pdf>