

RESTORING HOPE

Discussion Guide



AMERICAN
BIBLE
SOCIETY



RESTORING HOPE DISCUSSION GUIDE

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[Traumahealinginstitute.org](https://traumahealinginstitute.org)

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FOR THE GROUP LEADER

Today, people are hurting. Some people are reeling from an intense experience of trauma, loss, or grief. Others are overwhelmed in the wake of community violence or natural disaster. And many of us struggle with everyday stress, worry, anger, or sadness. American Bible Society's Restoring Hope ministry created this discussion guide to help people explore what it looks like to trust Jesus and others with any kind of pain or hurt they're facing.

PURPOSE

With this Bible study, your church or faith community takes a meaningful step forward in welcoming and caring for the full range of human emotions, especially the challenging ones — just as Christ did. Participants will:

- Acknowledge how hard it can be to trust God when we are suffering
- Explore how Jesus responded to the suffering of others
- Discuss how the community can be like Jesus when people are in pain
- Learn a simple way to be present for others when their hearts are heavy

PLANNING

This discussion guide includes a Bible study from Mark 5 along with time for individual reflection and group discussion. You can meet either in person or online. This guide offers timing suggestions for a 60-minute discussion, but you are welcome to take more time if your group prefers that.

MATERIALS

If your group is meeting in person, you'll need:

- A Bible, to read **Mark 5:25–34**
- A printed copy of the Safe Listener's Promise for each person
- Paper and something to write with for everyone

If your group is virtual, you can send links to the [Safe Listener's Promise](#) and the [Bible passage](#) to your group in advance.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

I. INTRODUCTION

5 minutes

Before you start, you may want to lead the group in prayer. Then, open the conversation by saying something like this:

We are living in a stressful time, and many of us are hurting. This group is a place to explore how we can care well for ourselves and for others in the difficult times of our lives — both in times of intense pain and in times of loneliness, anger, sadness, or worry.

Trusting Jesus with the whole truth of our suffering, like the woman in the Bible story we will meet, takes a lot of courage. Being a safe place for others' suffering, the way Christ did, isn't easy either. We will read the story from the Gospel of Mark and talk about these things. Then we will look at a practical way to care for others when their hearts are heavy.

Let's begin by remembering to care for each other right now. We want to listen well, respect each other, and give space for all voices to be heard. No one will have to share anything personal if they don't want to. But if anyone chooses to trust us with what's in their hearts, we agree to keep it confidential. Can we all agree on this?

II. LISTEN: SCRIPTURE

5 minutes

Read the story of Jesus and the bleeding woman, [Mark 5:23–35](#).

III. DISCUSS

35 minutes, with a 5-minute break

PART 1: DARING TO TRUST JESUS WITH OUR SUFFERING

Character study: the bleeding woman. *15 minutes*

Discussion questions *5 minutes*

Read these questions to open up a group conversation. You probably won't have time to discuss them all, so let the conversation follow participants' curiosity:

1. How would you describe this woman?
2. What caused her to approach Jesus the way she did?
3. The woman tells Jesus "the whole truth." What does that mean to you?
4. Why do you think she was trembling with fear?

Individual reflection and sharing *10 minutes*

Share these questions with participants, and invite them to reflect or journal about the one or two that interest them most:

1. Have you ever struggled with a problem that just didn't seem to get better? Did you dare to reach out for help?
2. Have you ever been afraid to tell God or another person "the whole truth" about what was weighing on you? What were you afraid might happen if you did?
3. How do you think Jesus would respond to "the whole truth" of your story?

After a few minutes' quiet, invite people to share their reflections with the group, if they choose to.

This is a good spot for a 5-minute break.

PART 2: BEING LIKE JESUS WHEN OTHERS ARE SUFFERING

Character study: Jesus. *15 minutes*

Discussion questions *5 minutes*

Read these questions aloud to lead the second part of the discussion. Again, let the group pursue the questions that they find most compelling:

1. Why do you think Jesus wanted to know who touched him?
2. What makes Jesus a safe place for the woman to share her story?
3. Have you met anyone you dared to trust when you needed help? How did you know you could trust that person? What were they like?
4. At the end of their interaction, Jesus calls the woman “daughter.” Why did he refer to her this way?
5. What do you think Jesus was trying to teach his disciples and the crowd in his interaction with this woman?

Group reflection and sharing *10 minutes*

Share these questions with participants, and invite them to reflect or journal about the one or two that interest them most:

1. Sometimes the answers we are given while in pain are not helpful. What are some unhelpful responses you’ve experienced?
2. What is the role of church or community in caring for people when they’re in pain?
3. As a community, how can we be more like Jesus by caring for each other when we’re in pain? How do we do this already, and how might we do it better?
4. After a few minutes, invite another round of group sharing.

IV. LEARN: SAFE LISTENER’S PROMISE

10 minutes

Introducing a practical tool to help care for others in pain.

Read the Safe Listener’s Promise aloud. Then ask:

1. What parts of the Safe Listener’s Promise feel most important to you?
2. Which parts feel challenging to live up to?

After some discussion, invite people to consider making the promise themselves.

V. CLOSING INVITATION AND PRAYER

5 minutes

If your church or organization has decided to offer additional Restoring Hope ministry opportunities, you can explain more about Anchored in Hope groups or offer an invitation to:

1. *[For anyone]*: **Learn more.** As you gauge your community's interest, suggest offering people opportunities to learn on their own through the resources offered on our website, americanbible.org/restoringhope.
2. *[For leaders]*: **Become a group leader.** If you are recruiting people to participate in an Anchored in Hope group, or to become group facilitators, invite leaders to sign up for an Anchored in Hope group or facilitator training.
3. **Engage your church:** Consider the next level of the Church Toolkit to engage your whole church in a journey of healing together.

You can make that invitation by saying something like this:

Both of the things we've talked about today—trusting Jesus with our whole truth, and becoming a community where people can bring their whole truth—can be really hard. It's not a one-step process. For those interested in exploring these topics further ...

If you'd like, close in prayer.

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