Lemon Theme: Trials - When Life Gives you Lemons

**DEVOTIONAL/LESSON STARTERS & WORKSHOP IDEAS**

*Add in your own points, illustrations, explanations, and relating Bible verses.*

Slice Those Lemons!

- **Slice LEMONS to make PIE.**
  - Concentrate on the sweetness of the Lord.
  - Concentrate on the sweetness of the Word.
  - Count your blessings.
  - Enjoy the meringue.
- **Slice LEMONS to make LEMONADE.**
  - Lemonade is for sharing.
  - Stir up some love.
  - Serve other people.
  - Concentrate on the needs of others.
  - Don’t forget to add some sugar. (be sweet)
- **Slice LEMONS to make BEAUTY TREATMENTS.**
  - Lemons have several uses when it comes to beauty treatments. Soften your elbows, cleanse your face, whiten your nails, and other things.
  - How do we use our life “lemons” to beautify?
    - Speak kind words even through trials.
    - Don’t lose your temper even through trials.
    - Share Jesus even through trials.
    - Encourage others through your trials.
- **Don’t let ugly trials turn you into an “ugly” person by having bad attitudes, confrontational spirits, and unkind words.**
- **Slice and cut through the bad to bring out the good.**
Do a Study on Queen Esther

- Circumstances became bleak for her people.
  - She was brave about it. (going before the king without a summons) Esther 4:16
  - She put other people first (what she did affected other people) Esther 8:6
- Sometimes we are put in circumstances that in the end glorify the Lord.
- “and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Esther 4:14

Getting Past the Why Me Syndrome

- Questions that overwhelm:
  - What did I do to deserve this?
  - Why did this happen to me?
  - How could I have avoided this?
  - Is there something wrong with me?
  - How come I can’t just be like everybody else?
- Change your thinking.
  - Look Inward (refuel yourself and rest in the Lord)
    - Work on healing yourself first.
    - Make sure there is nothing between you and the Lord. (confess any sin)
    - Meditate on God’s Word. (let it invigorate you)
  - Look outward (focus on someone other than yourself)
  - Look upward (focus on prayer)
  - Look over (Jesus is beside you. Lean on Him.)
- Remember Christ suffered (1 Peter 4)

God is Still There When we Hurt

- One of the things about trials is that we sometimes want to either blame God or act like He isn’t there anymore.
• Look at Esther. Through her story we see how she was in such a predicament, especially with Haman. God worked through Esther to reveal Haman’s plot.
• We need to REMEMBER that God has a way of revealing things that can be a comfort when we hurt.
• We need to REMEMBER that God can still use us even when we hurt.
• We need to REMEMBER that God hasn’t moved and He is still in control even when we hurt.

In the Squeeze

• Knowing what to do when life comes squeezing you tight.
• Story of Joseph (Genesis 37)
  o His brothers put him down in the pit (or dry well).
  o He couldn’t get out
  o Someone else had to get him out.
    ▪ He had to allow them to help him or he would have stayed down there.
    ▪ Lesson to learn---Things don’t always get better just because you feel a little pressure off of you.
      • Joseph was sold into slavery. Getting out of the hole didn’t answer all of his problems.
      • Getting out of a squeeze won’t answer all yours either, but it is better than just staying there.
• Allow the Lord to take the pressure off of you.
• Things may not be perfect but relying on Christ to lift you up out of where you are will help you get through to the next step.
• Joseph had to wait a long time before he had any comforts in his life. He even ended up back in prison and not through any fault of his own. In the end though, God blessed him.
• The key is learning to rely on the Lord to lift us and not try to lift ourselves out without any help. The squeeze will just get tighter and you won’t have any wriggle-room.
Fainting Spells

- David said, “I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.” Psalm 27:13
- When you are about to faint from the trials of life...
  - See God’s goodness
  - See God’s blessings
  - See God’s love
  - See God’s forgiveness
  - See God’s strength

Bible Characters Who Faced Hardships

*Here are just a few...*

- Job (loss of possessions, family, friends, and health)
- Daniel (lion’s den)
- David (being chased by Saul and his armies)
- Paul (arrested, thorn in the flesh)
- Joseph (sold into slavery)
- Naomi (loss of her husband)
- Hannah (dealing with infertility)

Workshop Topics

- *Finding the Path When it Hurts to Walk* – Psalm 16:11; Psalm 139:3; Psalm 142:3

- *Hearing God’s Voice When the Pain is Roaring* – Psalm 29:1-11 (the voice of God); Daniel 6 (story of Daniel and the Lion’s Den); Jeremiah 33:3

- *Dealing with Adversity* – Learning from Job and all of Job’s trials (loss of all his possessions; all his children dying; boils, you name it) How did Job deal with it? What can we do to get through the rough times?
• **Clinging to the Quiet When Life Gets Loud** – Focusing on yourself to rest and refuel through God’s grace and love. Allowing the peace of God to fill you amid the uproar of life.

• **Temporary Problems Still Hurt** – Learning to deal with everyday issues that get us down. Leaning on Jesus more one step at a time.

• **Holding on Even in Mid Fall** – Holding on to the Lord and His strength when you are right in the middle of falling apart.

• **Rejoicing in Hope** – Romans 12:12

• **Sticking a Fork in Your Own Arm** – Stop hurting yourself by what you say and what you do. Aim higher. Set goals. Don’t let your past hold back your future and what you can accomplish in your personal life and in what you accomplish for Christ.

• **Staying Positive in the Perils of Life** – Romans 8:28

• **Trials, Triumphs, and Everyday Life** – Getting past trials to enjoy your everyday life. Improve your wellbeing by not bearing the load by yourself. Trust and rely on the Lord. He is the God of big triumphs but also the little ones that we sometimes ignore. Hold on to those to get you to the big triumphs. Enjoy each blessing from the Lord. Psalm 23; Psalm 27:13

• **Between a Rock and a Hard Place** – Psalm 40:2 (Know the pressure is only temporary)

• **Walking in the Midst of Trouble** – “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me...” Psalm 138:7

• **Reflecting on the Presence of the Lord When you Feel all Alone** – Story of Jonah “But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD...” Jonah 1:3) Joshua 1:9; Isaiah 41:10; Matthew 28:20
• **Facing our Giants When we Feel so Small** – Story of David and Goliath; 1 Samuel 17.

• **Finding Confidence and Courage** – Learning to be confident in Christ and taking courage to overcome life’s trials that come our way. Proverbs 3:26; Joshua 1:9; Philippians 1:6; Hebrews 4:16

• **Just Breathe** – Inhaling the sweet breath of peace that only God can give. Set your problems aside for a time and concentrate on your Maker. Allow the Lord to lift your burdens from off your heart so your breathing can go back to normal.

---

**Devotional Starter Terms of Use:**

Feel free to add and expand upon this material to complete your own devotionals and lessons, but please do not share the material as is.

I ask for the sake of the women’s ministry leaders and pastor’s wives that gather ideas here, that you do not print your finished devotionals online. It will help keep a fresh take for the ladies that attend our women’s ministry events (banquets, conferences, retreats, etc.). We don’t want what you share in person to be something your guests have already read on Facebook or a blog somewhere or saw on Pinterest. Let’s keep it fresh!