

## Hope in a Time of Despair

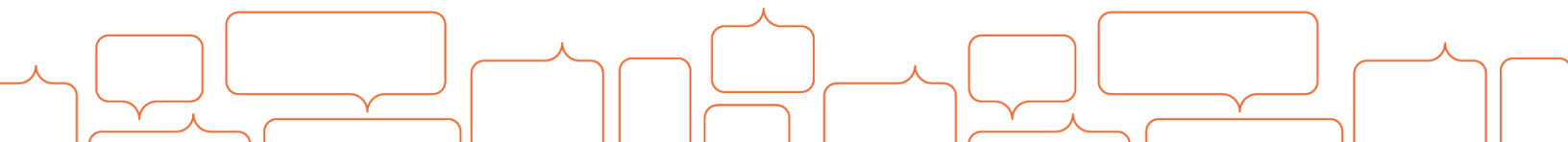
### Small Group Bible Study

#### Psalm 31 New International Version (NIV)

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

<sup>1</sup>In you, LORD, I have taken refuge;  
let me never be put to shame;  
deliver me in your righteousness.  
<sup>2</sup>Turn your ear to me,  
come quickly to my rescue;  
be my rock of refuge,  
a strong fortress to save me.  
<sup>3</sup>Since you are my rock and my fortress,  
for the sake of your name lead and guide me.  
<sup>4</sup>Keep me free from the trap that is set for me,  
for you are my refuge.  
<sup>5</sup>Into your hands I commit my spirit;  
deliver me, LORD, my faithful God.  
<sup>6</sup>I hate those who cling to worthless idols;  
as for me, I trust in the LORD.  
<sup>7</sup>I will be glad and rejoice in your love,  
for you saw my affliction  
and knew the anguish of my soul.  
<sup>8</sup>You have not given me into the hands of the enemy  
but have set my feet in a spacious place.  
<sup>9</sup>Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress;  
my eyes grow weak with sorrow,  
my soul and body with grief.  
<sup>10</sup>My life is consumed by anguish  
and my years by groaning;  
my strength fails because of my affliction,  
and my bones grow weak.  
<sup>11</sup>Because of all my enemies,  
I am the utter contempt of my neighbors  
and an object of dread to my closest friends—  
those who see me on the street flee from me.  
<sup>12</sup>I am forgotten as though I were dead;  
I have become like broken pottery.  
<sup>13</sup>For I hear many whispering,  
“Terror on every side!”

They conspire against me  
and plot to take my life.  
<sup>14</sup>But I trust in you, LORD;  
I say, “You are my God.”  
<sup>15</sup>My times are in your hands;  
deliver me from the hands of my enemies,  
from those who pursue me.  
<sup>16</sup>Let your face shine on your servant;  
save me in your unfailing love.  
<sup>17</sup>Let me not be put to shame, LORD,  
for I have cried out to you;  
but let the wicked be put to shame  
and be silent in the realm of the dead.  
<sup>18</sup>Let their lying lips be silenced,  
for with pride and contempt  
they speak arrogantly against the righteous.  
<sup>19</sup>How abundant are the good things  
that you have stored up for those who fear you,  
that you bestow in the sight of all,  
on those who take refuge in you.  
<sup>20</sup>In the shelter of your presence you hide them  
from all human intrigues;  
you keep them safe in your dwelling  
from accusing tongues.  
<sup>21</sup>Praise be to the LORD,  
for he showed me the wonders of his love  
when I was in a city under siege.  
<sup>22</sup>In my alarm I said,  
“I am cut off from your sight!”  
Yet you heard my cry for mercy  
when I called to you for help.  
<sup>23</sup>Love the LORD, all his faithful people!  
The LORD preserves those who are true to him,  
but the proud he pays back in full.  
<sup>24</sup>Be strong and take heart,  
all you who hope in the LORD.



# Hope in a Time of Despair

## Small Group Bible Study

### Introduce

The Psalms were first written and compiled as a communal prayer book set to music. What you're reading are ancient song lyrics that people would sing or pray together in worship. Jesus would have grown up with these prayers and had the Psalms as his prayer book. You are about to pray the same prayers that Jesus prayed! Let's look at Psalm 31 as a case study of what it looks like for a community of people to trust God in the midst of a helpless, seemingly hopeless situation.

### Read Psalm 31

### Discuss

1. **Where does the world turn for safety and comfort? What about you?**  
What are the "worthless idols" (v. 6) that are so tempting to trust in this season?
2. **According to Psalm 31, what can God provide that this world cannot?**
3. **What resonates with you from Psalm 31?**  
The psalmist commits his "spirit" and his "times" or experiences into God's hands (vv. 5, 15), while naming his despair, anxiety, abandonment and isolation. The people of God would have worshiped with these same words. Why do you think these ancient phrases from Psalm 31 spoke to their experience and even resonate with your present experience?

### Apply

1. **Pray for rescue.**  
Psalm 31 surrenders a broken world and broken hearts to God, worshiping God as the one who sees, loves, and rescues. Tell God about your longing for safety and name the seemingly hopeless situations you and those around you are facing. Ask God for rescue.\*

**Tip:** You can pray phrases from Psalm 31 that resonate with your experience.

2. **Share hope.**  
At the end, the psalmist gives a call to prayer and invites us to "be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD." In the same way, we can call each other to have this trust and hope. Ask God, if there is there anyone in your relational network you can invite to hope in God. Or, if you are experiencing isolation, ask God to show you the people you could connect with who will remind you of what is good and true. Contact the people God brings to your mind and heart.

*\* If this is the first time you are surrendering your life and a broken world to God, this may be an opportunity to ask God to become the center of your life and declare to him that you want to follow his leadership. Tell this to God in prayer (prayer is simply a conversation with God). Then tell Christian friends that you have taken this step.*

### Conclude

Pray for each other. We've shared about where we turn for safety and comfort. Let's pray together and trust Jesus to be our safe shelter.

For tips on leading a small group online, [watch this!](#)

