

FALL FOCUS SERIES #3 – SUICIDE
GROW GROUP LEADERS GUIDE

This guide is provided to assist you in leading your grow group. Use the elements of this guide as you see fit for your group.

LEADER PREPARATION

1. Passages to read:
 - Proverbs 14:12
 - Exodus 20:13
 - John 14:6
 - Mathew 5:13-14

2. Introduction to **Proverbs** (adapted from ESV study Bible by Pastor Kevin):
 - **Author and Date-**
 - Proverbs itself mentions Solomon (reigned c. 971–931 B.C.) as author or collector of its contents (1:1; 10:1), including the proverbs copied by Hezekiah’s men (25:1). There are also two batches of sayings from a group called “the wise” (22:17–24:22; 24:23–34), and “oracles” from Agur (30:1–33) and Lemuel (31:1–9). But no author is named for the song in praise of the excellent wife that ends the book (31:10–31).
 - **Theme-**
 - Proverbs states its theme right at the book’s beginning (1:1–7): its goal is to describe and instill “wisdom” in God’s people, a wisdom that is founded in the “fear of the LORD” and that works out covenant life in the practical details of everyday situations and relationships.

3. Introduction to Exodus (from the Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary, Hughes and Laney, 2001. (One of Pastor Kraig’s favorites!))
 - **Author -**
 - Moses is traditionally seen as the author of the book of Exodus, even though he appears in the third person. This view is supported by the following considerations: (1) Joshua refers to the Mosaic authorship of the book of the law, which would have included much of Exodus (Josh. 8:34-35). (2) The book is closely connected with Genesis, which has traditionally been viewed as authored by Moses. (3) Moses names himself several times in connection with the Lord’s command to write (17:14; 24:4; 34:27). (4) Jesus ascribed texts from Exodus to Moses (see Mark 7:10 for an example). (5) When Jesus said that Moses wrote of him, Jesus affirmed the conventional

view of Moses being the author of Genesis through Deuteronomy (John 5:46).

- **Purpose/Theme –**
 - The book of Exodus was designed to show how the Israelites got out of Egypt and how God came to dwell among them in the tabernacle. It formed the bridge from the story of Joseph in Egypt at the end of Genesis to the detailed laws of the Mosaic covenant in Leviticus.
4. Introduction to **Mathew** (from the Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary, Hughes and Laney, 2001. (One of Pastor Kraig’s favorites!)):
- **Author and Date-**
 - Though not stated explicitly, Matthew, the Galilean tax collector who became Jesus’ disciple is regarded as the author and was written somewhere around AD 50.
 - **Theme-**
 - Matthew desired his readers to understand that Jesus was the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham, Israel’s greatest patriarch, and to David, Israel’s greatest king. It was designed to convince its readers that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament prophecy. The book was also intended to reveal that the messianic kingdom was not fully realized in Jesus’ day, but its fulfillment awaits his glorious return. Until then, Jesus the Messiah reigns in full authority over the earth as he seeks to make disciples around the world.

GROUP ACTIVITY: “Experiences with Suicide”

- Objective: Reflect on the groups experiences as they relate to the subject of suicide.

- Directions: Begin by providing each group member with a 3 X 5 card (or similar) and a pen (if they don’t already have one). Ask your group, “Have you ever known someone who contemplated or completed a suicide?”

Instruct the group members not to write any names but to jot down some thoughts on the experience.

- What did they observe?
- What did they feel?
- How did they respond?
- What was the hardest part?

After your established time limit for writing a few notes, ask for volunteers to share one of their stories. Do not be in a hurry with the

stories as each probably has some associated pain. Please plan plenty of time to listen.

- Supplies: 3 X 5 card (or similar)
Pens or pencils

- Take Away: Ask group members if there were any common themes to the stories.

Ask participants what they learned from the activity.

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION

- Since this is the 3rd week of Proverbs 14:12, say it together: Proverbs 14:12 ^{ESV}
There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.
Remember that the key to memorization is repetition.

STUDY/REVIEW

1. Discussion Helps:

- Invite all group members to participate in the discussion of questions. Don't allow one or two individuals to dominate the discussions. At times ask quieter individuals a question directly to get them involved.
- Keep the discussion going by having participants explain their answers. If someone gives an off target or untrue (unbiblical) answer, ask them to explain why they believe it is true. Then gently correct as necessary with scripture when possible.

2. Group Discussion:

- This follows the Review/Study Guide from Sunday's bulletin (in bold).
- Notes in italics have been added to assist you in guiding your group to appropriate conclusions.

This week we will not be so scripture intensive but have a deeper reflection on the impacts of suicide and our responses to those that survive it.

1. Start by reviewing the suicide stats presented by Pastor Kraig.

1. Data and statistics for the US
 - a. Suicide is the 10th Leading cause of death in the US
 - b. In 2017, 47,173 Americans died by suicide
 - c. In 2017, there were 1.4 million suicide attempts
2. Data and statistics for the state of Oregon
 - a. 8th leading cause of death in Oregon, but second leading cause of death ages 15-34
 - b. A suicide occurs in our state every 11 hours.
 - c. More than six times as many people died by suicide in Oregon in 2017 than in alcohol related motor vehicle accidents.
 - d. Klamath County has the 5th highest suicide rate in the state, out of 36 counties.

- a. Why do you feel suicides are on the increase?
- b. Do you think suicide is more accepted now? Why?

2. What are some warning signs of suicide?

If a person talks about:

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain

Behaviors that may signal risk, especially if related to a painful event, loss or change:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for methods
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation/Shame
- Agitation/Anger
- Relief/Sudden Improvement

3. How does one's faith relate to suicide?

- a. Trusting in Christ.
 - b. Hope of their salvation.
 - c. Do Christians suffer from depression?
- 4. Open questions for the group (answers vary):**
- a. What should be the church's response be to:
 - i. A suicidal person?
 - ii. A survivor of suicide?
 - iii. The family of one who completed suicide?
 - b. How does faith relate to suicide?
 - c. Why is it so hard to ask someone if they are suicidal?
- 5. Related to Mathew 5:13-14 (NIV)** "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden."
- a. Is it possible to be salt and light to a person who is suicidal? How?
 - b. Are there other scriptures that would help build hope in a suicidal person?

Application

- 1. How much should you trust your own abilities to evaluate which ways to go in your life?**
- 2. What can you trust in, for direction in determining which ways to go in your life? How do you go about doing this?**

APPLICATION ACTIONS

1. Action Areas:
 - Asking someone if they are thinking about committing suicide is one of the most difficult things to do. Form pairs in the group and practice asking each other if they are suicidal.
 - Have each person think of someone who they feel may be showing signs of suicide and make a promise that they will ask them how they are doing this next week and be prepared to ask if they are thinking about hurting themselves if necessary.
2. Pray over all that you have learned and preparation to be salt and light to a hopeless world.