



MEETING AGENDA

ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

When you face problems and worries in your life, what helps you to pause and reflect deeply on the glory of God?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[There is no right answer, but this is an opportunity for people to share within their comfort level about steps they take to draw close to God when facing difficult circumstances.]

INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

Was there one idea that stood out to you from today's message about what God can do in our lives as we praise Him?

What practices or habits do you use to work through problems, dissatisfaction, and worry? Do you find it more natural to be self-reliant or complain to others than pray to God?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Consider the always-available source of strength we have in our relationship with God and how we can rely on God's presence whenever we need it. Realize that in his strength, God knows our weakness and that self-reliance never works. He gives a perspective that establishes our "sure-footing" in him and even provides the courage we need to depend on him.]

INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

1. Read 1 John 2:3-6. How does obedience stem from our dependence on God, and how can it deepen our relationship with Him even further? What does an obedient life to Christ look like to you?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[We cannot be fully obedient because, without Christ, we are slaves to sin. By depending on God and not ourselves, He will give us the desire and strength to be obedient. Our obedience to God is a tool by which He sanctifies us, making us more like Christ.]

2. Read Isaiah 40:31. We often feel that we must be independent and self-reliant to be strong. How does this point us to God as the true source of strength?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Isaiah 40:31 says, "but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." Patience can be difficult to maintain. However, this verse clarifies that if we have patience, God will strengthen us. And, as we learn to wait, our faith is strengthened.]

3. Read Romans 16:25-27. What words or phrases help you think about a new perspective for practicing your faith? What do we learn about Jesus through this doxology?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Discuss who God is, such as "the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ" and other ideas or questions from the group.]

4. Read II Corinthians 12:8, 9. How does this passage compare to Romans 16:25-27? How can we experience God's strength during our weakness?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[There are two essential starting points from which we can recognize and experience God's strength in our weakness. In her article, "How to Experience God's Strength in Your Weakness," Christina Patterson writes that we must trust that God's grace is sufficient despite our difficulties that cause weakness. Paul recognized this as if he wrote 2 Corinthians 12:8-9. It is in our weakness that we experience God's strength the most. Jon Bloom writes, "God does not want us to be strong. God wants to be our strength."]

APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

[Hosts: don't feel pressure to cover all the questions below. Pick the one or two questions that might lead to the best conversation, but if discussion fades, include the others.]

1. While the conscious decision to pray takes more strength, it creates peace. In contrast, the tendency to worry comes naturally but creates panic. Consider what often triggers you to worry: how can you replace habits of worry with prayer practices?
2. God gives us courage so we can have a sure footing regardless of our situations. How can you be courageous in God in the midst of difficult situations?
3. God brings about obedience in our lives. This is "God's way of shaping us into who we aren't." How does this contradict what the world says about God?

PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

*Father God, use our limited faith and your great love to shape our daily thoughts and actions to praise and glorify you. Make firm our understanding that bringing widespread glory to your name through eternity is the goal of your church and our lives. Help us always turn first to you and rely fully on your promises for the strength we need, the desire and courage for obedience, and the deep peace that follows. In Jesus' name, **Amen.***