

UNCHARTED

NAVIGATING LIFE'S TENSIONS

Group Discussion Guide



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Uncharted: Navigating Life’s Tensions

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Series Overview

In our culture, we face many tensions. Our response to the tensions may be to chart an unsure course. Tensions can be positive or negative. By God’s design, tension leads to growth.

Purpose of This Guide

The primary purpose of this group guide is to reinforce and deepen the lessons of the Grace Church message series: **Uncharted**.

You may choose to use this guide:

- with your Grace Group.
- with any group of people interested in knowing what the Bible says about these topics.

1-Navigating Life's Tensions

Scripture: [Genesis 32](#)

Icebreaker: What is It's Purpose?

Look around the room. Make a list of some objects you see. What is the purpose of each one? Think of ways you could use each object that are not consistent with their intended purpose. What problems could result from using the objects in that way?

Discussion Questions

- What is the purpose of the book of Proverbs according to each of these verses?
 - ▶ [Proverbs 1:2](#)
 - ▶ [Proverbs 1:3](#)
 - ▶ [Proverbs 1:4](#)
 - ▶ [Proverbs 1:5](#)
- Consider how Jacob wrestled with God as he learned that human self-will is no match for dependence on God ([Gen 32:24-32](#)). In your own struggles, what has it taken for you to “receive” instruction from God ([Job 22:22](#))?
- Will being young or naive (physically, mentally, or spiritually) prevent you from becoming more wise ([Acts 4:13](#))? What is the key determining factor in becoming more wise?
- In what way can reverence of and fear of the Lord help you learn from God's Word ([Pro 1:7](#))? As a Christ-follower, what does it mean to fear the Lord compared to fearing things of the world?
- In what ways can learning from Proverbs help you navigate life's tensions ([Pro 3:1-4](#))?

Dig a Little Deeper: Fear of the Lord

You can say you don't like the idea of a God who has the power to hurt you. That doesn't change the fact of who God is and how powerful He really is. You can't make God be who you want Him to be. He is who He is ([Exo 3:14](#)). Consider how your reverence of and fear of the Lord is to your benefit.

Can give you confidence.	Pro 14:26-27
It leads to life.	Pro 19:23
It is the beginning of wisdom.	Pro 1:7

Application Exercise: Proverb a Day

Select one of these verses to repeat to yourself throughout each day of the coming week.

Pro 1:5 A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,

Pro 1:7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

2-Busyness vs. Life Balance

Scripture: [Rom 12:1-5](#)

Icebreaker: Over-scheduled

What are some things that cause us to become over-scheduled? In what way is being over-scheduled a badge of honor in our culture?

Discussion Questions

- What is the reason that Paul urges us to present ourselves as living sacrifices ([Rom 11:36-12:1](#))?

- How can you renew your mind ([Rom 12:2](#))? When your mind is renewed, in what way are you transformed?

- In your experience, is it possible to find a perfect schedule? Why or why not? Rather than finding a perfect schedule, in what ways have you experienced seasons and rhythms of busy and rest ([Ecc 3:1-8](#))?

- Discuss how God's blessing is more apparent to believers when they make God's kingdom their primary focus.
 - ▶ [Mat 6:33-34](#)
 - ▶ [Mat 4:17](#)

Dig a Little Deeper: Renewed Mind

Consider the following aspects of a renewed mind:

- Non-conformed: Not allowing the world around you to make you think wrongly about God. It is important to manage our thought life [**Php 4:8**].
- Spiritual: Pursuing and receiving the work of God's Spirit in our lives [**Eph 4:21-32**].
- Prayerful: Lifting up enemies in prayer and asking God to protect you from enemies and to resolve conflicts [**Num 12:13**].
- Prepared: Not being intellectually lazy [**1Pet 1:13**].
- Humble: Not thinking ourselves too good to do some foot washing [**John 13:3-5**].

Application Exercise: Fully Surrendered?

Consider how well you are doing at making God's kingdom your primary focus. For each statement, indicate how frequently it describes you.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Often <- - - - - - - - >Rarely</i>
There are facets of my life not aligned with God's will.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
I act in ways that are unkind.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
I have prideful thoughts or actions.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
I decline opportunities to serve those who I know God wants me to serve.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
FOCUS	<i>Self <- - - - - - - - >Kingdom</i>

3-*Condemnation vs. Grace*

Scripture: **Psalm 103**

Icebreaker: Who is a Blessing?

Think about those in your life who are a blessing to you. What is it about them that is a blessing?

Discussion Questions

- What are some reasons to personally praise God (**Psa 103:1-5**)?
- Discuss how we can overcome things that block us from experiencing God's grace.

<i>Hindrance</i>	<i>Help</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Believer being racked with guilt (2Cor 12:9)▶ Unsaved thinking they are not good enough (Rom 3:23-24)▶ Person with intellectual understanding but who doesn't "feel" it (Eph 1:18-19)▶ Other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Remember that His grace is not based on your merits (Psa 103:10-11).▶ Read His Word to remember His benefits (Psa 27:4).▶ Remember what He has already done for you and praise Him (Psa 103:12-13).

- What is it about Jesus that should make it easy to approach Him when we struggle with our weaknesses (**Heb 4:15-16**)?

Dig a Little Deeper: Three Keys to Grace

<i>Faith</i>	<i>Repentance</i>	<i>Humility</i>
Rom 5:1-2	Gal 2:16-21	1Pet 5:5-6
We can't please God without faith. Eph 2:8	Nothing we "do" can save us. Heb 6:1	We must admit to God how powerless we are without Him. Rom 14:7-11
We have access by faith to this grace in which we stand.	If righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.	God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.
Hindrance = unbelief	Hindrance = dead works	Hindrance = pride

Application Exercise: Psalm of Praise

Using **Psalm 103** as an example, write a psalm of praise to God. Also use examples of joys God has shown you in your life.

4-Me vs. You

Scripture: [1Kgs 3:7](#)

Icebreaker: Put on Your Own Oxygen Mask

What is the reason a flight attendant tells you to put on your own oxygen mask before you assist others in putting on their oxygen masks?

Discussion Questions

*“...but I am a little child; I do not know how to **go out or come in.**”
(1Kgs 3:7, NKJV)*

- In what ways are you being outward-focused (going out)? How does being outward-focused give you a sense of joy and purpose?

- In what ways are you getting rested and refreshed (coming in)? Describe what happens when you do not get adequate rest.
 - ▶ physically
 - ▶ spiritually

- Discuss how keeping a healthy rhythm in your relationship with Christ is like going in and out ([John 10:9](#)). What practical things can you do to keep a healthy rhythm?

- How would you answer someone who accused you of being selfish for blocking off time on your schedule to be alone ([Mark 6:31](#))?

Dig a Little Deeper: What Destroys Rest?

Consider some of the things that can destroy rest and what you could do to minimize the destruction.

<i>Destroyers of Rest</i>	<i>How I Can Minimize Them</i>
▶ Busyness (Psa 39:6)	
▶ Conflict (2Cor 6:5)	
▶ Grief (Jer 45:3)	
▶ Unconfessed sin (Psa 32:3-5)	
▶ Sickness (Job 30:17)	

Application Exercise: Rest Reminder

Pick a verse to repeat throughout each day of the coming week to remind you of the importance of rest. (If you don't have one in mind, consider one of the following.)

And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." (Exo 33:14, NKJV)

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (Mat 11:28, NKJV)

5-Us vs. Them

Scripture: [Acts 10](#)

Icebreaker: Us vs. Them

Divide into three groups:

- ▶ Those who sleep on their stomachs
- ▶ Those who sleep on their backs
- ▶ Those who sleep on their sides

Take a few minutes to let each group explain why they are the best and why they don't understand the other two groups.

Discussion Questions

- God showed Peter that he should not call any person common or unclean ([Acts 10:28](#)). What categories of people would you be most uncomfortable socializing with and why? Discuss how differences put us out of our comfort zone.
- What did Peter discover that God values more than ethnic distinctiveness ([Acts 10:34-35](#))?
- According to Peter, what factors lead to the remission of sins ([Acts 10:43-45](#))? What part does gender, class, appearance, or ethnicity play in remission of sins?
- What acts of kindness are the best indicators that you are a child of God?
 - ▶ [Luke 6:27-36](#)
 - ▶ [Mat 5:44-48](#)

Dig a Little Deeper: No Favoritism

Christ pulled down the old borders that had divided humanity before He established the Church (**Gal 3:26-28**). List the categories where God shows no favoritism. Have you ever felt disadvantaged because you belong to one of those categories? In what way does knowing God's view of the matter give you reassurance?

Application Exercise: Seeing It God's Way

Challenge yourself to pay attention to your reactions to those who are different from you. When you experience a reaction that is contrary to God's view, ask Him to forgive you and to help you see others as He sees them.

6-More vs. Less

Scripture: [Luke 12:13-21](#)

Icebreaker: More or Less?

Make a list of things where more is better.

Next, make a list of things where less is better.

Discussion Questions

- What was the problem with the rich man's thinking in [Luke 12:13-21](#)?

- The issue is not having riches. The issue is trusting in riches. What can we apply from the following passages?
 - ▶ [Mark 10:23-27](#)
 - ▶ [Psalm 49:6-7](#)

- In what ways could having too much **or** too little hamper your relationship with God ([Pro 30:7-9](#))? The point is where we focus our thoughts. Are we focused on money or on our relationship with God? What are some practical things we can do to make sure our degree of wealth does not become a hindrance to our spiritual growth?

- Why is your amount of wealth unrelated to your spirituality and not an indicator of how much God loves you?
 - ▶ [Luke 12:15](#)
 - ▶ [Philippians 4:11](#)

Dig a Little Deeper: Simplicity

Simplicity is a life of joyful unconcern for possessions. It is being content with either more or less [**Php 4:12**]. It helps us focus on the main thing, His Kingdom [**Mat 6:25-34**].

8 Tips for Simplicity

1. Buy things for usefulness, not status.
2. Reject things that produce addiction in you.
3. Make a habit of giving away things.
4. Resist consumer propoganda.
5. Enjoy things without owning them.
6. Appreciate creation.
7. Avoid being in debt.
8. Shun anything that distracts you from God.

Application Exercise: One Simple Thing

Pick one of the tips from the “8 Tips for Simplicity” list. Make a commitment to practice that tip for the next month [or longer].



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