

How Are You Doing... Really?

WEEK 2: A BEAUTIFUL THING

We're all carrying a burden right now, and no one should carry it alone. But how do we help others with their burdens when we feel weary and isolated? How do we carve out space for community in a chaotic and confusing season?

START TALKING

1. How long have you ever gone without person-to-person connection or contact? What happened? How did you feel?

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

1. When have you felt most connected to the people around you? What helped you feel safe to share the vulnerable or painful parts of your life in those circumstances?
2. When it comes to personal connections, what tends to be your biggest obstacle to sharing your thoughts, experiences, and emotions with the people you're close to?
3. Everybody approaches pain differently. When you're struggling with anxiety or despair, do you find it more tempting to dwell on your circumstances or avoid thinking about them altogether?

LOOK IT UP

Read Philippians 4:4-13 before answering the questions below.

1. Paul doesn't merely encourage readers to stop feeling anxious. Instead, he provides us with a substitute behavior to use when we're in a spiral. What benefits do you think may result from taking this approach when dealing with painful anxiety?
2. We typically think of a sense of peace as something we need to cultivate and then use as a safeguard against the disruptions of life. Paul reverses that formula. What do you think it means for God's peace to "protect" you (which is the phrase that appears in many Bible translations)?
3. Jesus said that the greatest love anyone can have is to lay down their life for the well-being of their friends. It's easy to understand what this looks like in a more extreme sense. But how can we show this kind of love in our everyday life?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

1. How can you be more aware of opportunities to share in someone else's pain this week? What daily reminders can you give yourself to ensure that concern for your community stays in the forefront of your mind?
2. What would it take for you to commit to being honest about how you're doing with a few people you trust? If you find yourself in the common position of not necessarily having those people in your life right now, what can you do this week to cultivate new relationships or rediscover old ones?
3. Who should you contact in the next few days and ask, "How are you doing... really?"