



Worship Study Guide for the week of September 27, 2015



WEPC Small Group Network

Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org

WEPC's Small Group Network meets in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Sermon: *Trials*

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [1 Peter 1:3-7](#).

Trials

- Our life in Christ is full of joy and hope and wonder at the overwhelming goodness of God. At the same time there are very real and very painful circumstances in our lives.
- They are real and painful ('grieved' 'tested' 'fire'); They are short-lived ('a little while'); They are refining ('genuineness'); They result in praise and glory for us and for Jesus ('praise and glory')
- And parenthetically they build our fellowship with one another ('you')
- We can say without anger and frustration, "This is what God has for me right now"
- God uses sin 'sinlessly'. (See the Cross)
- "For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil" ([1 Peter 3:17](#))
- "Let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful creator while doing good" ([1 Peter 4:19](#))

There is a Purpose, **not Necessarily a 'Lesson'**

- "When gold is melted in the fire the impurities float to the top and can be removed. When the refining fire is over, the gold is even more valuable. So it is with your faith in God. You have faith. You trust his promises. But there are impurities in it. There are elements of murmuring and pessimism (I speak from painful experience). And there are tendencies to trust money and position and popularity alongside God—dirt mingled with the gold of faith. These impurities in our faith hinder our fullest experience of the goodness and greatness of God. So God designs to refine our faith with the fires of trial and distress. His aim is that our faith be more pure and more genuine. That is, that it be more utterly dependent on him and not on things and other persons for our joy." (John Piper)
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.[a] 18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." ([Daniel 3:16-18](#))

How do I Feel in the Midst of This?

- "Through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything." ([II Corinthians 6:8-10](#))

These Trials are Limited and Watched and Precious to God

- “Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me; all day long an attacker oppresses me; my enemies trample on me all day long, for many attack me proudly. When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me? All day long they injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil. They stir up strife, they lurk; they watch my steps, as they have waited for my life. For their crime will they escape? In wrath cast down the peoples, O God! You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book? Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me. In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?” ([Psalm 56:1-11](#))
- Faith shimmers and glows when it is tested. There is plenty of glory to go around.

Going Deeper in God’s Worship

Reflect on the text together. [Hear the sermon here.](#)

- 1.) What is true about God’s character, promises or work?
- 2.) What does the Scripture teach you about yourself or others?
- 3.) Are you encouraged to follow Jesus in His mission? How?

Reflect on the whole of Sunday’s liturgy together. Locate this week’s [Order of Worship here.](#)

- 1.) Was there an element of the worship service that you would like to share with the group?
 - *A Scripture verse that was read?*
 - *A prayer that was prayed?*
 - *A song that was sung?*
 - *A sacrament that was administered?*
 - *A way that glory was given to God?*
 - *A way that someone encouraged you?*
- 2.) Did the Holy Spirit convict, change, or encourage you in any way you wish to share with the group?
- 3.) Is Jesus leading you or the group to take a specific risk to minister the Good News to Richmond? Your neighbors? Your co-workers? Your family and friends?
- 4.)

Going Further in Christ’s Mission

- 1.) Have the Scripture text open in front of you as a guide to your prayers.
 - Spend time thanking God and giving Him glory.
- 2.) Ask the Lord for vision, strength and faith as followers of Jesus Christ.
 - Count on the work of the Holy Spirit for change.
 - Ask for God’s forgiveness and grace to repent of sin and trust Jesus.
 - Pray for the world, our country, Richmond, and the Church.
 - Pray for members of your group, family members, or co-workers, neighbors and friends.

Kevin Greene, 2015