

Our Broken Hallelujahs 10 Week Study Plan

By Rebecca Burtram

Week One:

1. (10-15 minutes) Open with prayer. Ask each participant to share his or her favorite worship song or hymn and whether or not it has special meaning. Encourage people to tell the story of what makes the song important to them. This allows new groups to get to know each other a little, and it gets established groups talking.
2. (15 minutes) Watch the author's online video and read the introduction out loud together.
3. (20-30 minutes) React to the material: Come up with your own questions, allow people to share freely in response to the content, or use some of these questions:
 - a. What was your reaction to a pastor's kid/christian college graduate/pastor's wife admitting to struggling in her faith? Surprise? Horror? A lack of surprise ... as in "of course" someone in those roles would struggle?
 - b. What stood out to you most as you heard/read this section? Why?
 - c. Do you agree with the author that life is hard? Why or why not?
 - d. Have you ever found it difficult to enter into a worship song because the lyrics did not line up with your emotions/faith/etc.?
4. (3-5 minutes) Assign next week's reading. Participants should read Chapter 1 and answer the "Your Voice" questions in their books.
5. (5-10 minutes) Close in prayer. Share requests. Pray for God to reveal his love in a fresh way to each group member.

-You may also want to pray for others who come to mind that might benefit from this study (then invite them to come to the next session).

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Week Two:

1. (10-15 minutes) Open with prayer. Ask people to share their general reactions to the reading. How did they feel while reading? Was the amount of reading reasonable; did they have time to finish the reading? How did they feel about the questions they had to answer in their books?
2. (20-30 minutes) Use this time to go over the discussion questions from Chapter 1. Also, feel free to ask participants to react to thoughts, ideas, and stories from this chapter.
 - a. Are there wounds in your life that have been caused by those close to you? If so, how has this impacted your view of God?
 - b. What are some of the ways God has blessed you? Have any of those occurred while you were experiencing a time of heartache and pain?
 - c. What are some of the dreams God has put on your heart? Tell about how you have seen God use painful circumstances to fulfill those dreams, or how the broken moments you are in now might be bringing you closer to fulfilling those dreams.
 - d. What in particular stood out to you in this part of the book? Why?
3. (3-5 minutes) Assign next week's reading. Participants should read Chapters 2 and 3.
4. (5-10 minutes) Close in prayer. Share new requests and follow up on previous requests. Pray for God to reveal his love in a fresh way to each group member and for members to understand how to communicate God's love to those who have broken pieces. Pray for healing of damages caused by others.

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Week Three:

1. (10-15 minutes) Open with prayer. Ask people to share their general reactions to the reading.
2. (3-5 minutes) Watch the author's online video for Part 1.
3. (20-30 minutes) Use this time to react to thoughts, ideas, and stories from this section.
 - a. Emma said, "I decided God was distant, uncaring, and did not hear me. I thought, *Why bother with Him?* I still believed and wanted to be saved, but I unconsciously kept Him at arm's length. I felt a God that allowed so much pain and oppression obviously did not care about me on a personal level." Have you ever felt as Emma did? What changed to help you understand God's love for you personally? What would you have told Emma if you had known her at that point in her life?
 - b. How does the understanding of God's love as unfailing compare to understanding the love we see displayed by those in our lives or in the culture around us? Are there people in your life you wish God would not love with an unfailing love? What encouragement comes from knowing God loves even those people with an unfailing love?
 - c. What in particular stood out to you in this part of the book? Why?
4. (3-5 minutes) Assign next week's reading. Participants should read Chapter 4 and answer the "Your Voice" questions in their books.
5. (5-10 minutes) (5-10 minutes) Close in prayer. Share new requests and follow up on previous requests. Pray for God to reveal his love in a fresh way to each group member and for members to understand how to communicate God's love to those who have broken pieces. Pray for healing of damages caused by others.

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Week Four:

1. (10-15 minutes) Open with prayer. Ask people to share their general reactions to the reading.
2. (20-30 minutes) Use this time to go over the discussion questions from Chapter 4. Also, feel free to ask participants to react to thoughts, ideas, and stories from this section and how they related to them personally.
 - a. Have there been painful experiences in your life that are simply the result of being alive (not caused by the actions of others or by your own actions)? If so, has this impacted your view of God?
 - b. What are the things in life that reveal God's active presence in the world? (The intricacy of creation, the birth of a child, a miraculous work ... be specific about the things that speak to you individually.)
 - c. Does reflecting on God's active presence impact your perspective concerning God and the pain you have experienced? Do you see him in your situation, or do you see him as a distant observer?
 - d. What in particular stood out to you in this part of the book? Why?
3. (3-5 minutes) Assign next week's reading. Participants should read Chapters 5 and 6.
4. (5-10 minutes) Close in prayer. Share new requests and follow up on previous requests. Pray for God to reveal his love in a fresh way to each group member and for members to understand how to communicate God's love to those who have broken pieces. Pray for healing for the hurts that come from natural causes.

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Week Five:

1. (10-15 minutes) Open with prayer. Ask people to share their general reactions to the reading.
2. (3-5 minutes) Watch the author's online video for Part 2.
3. (20-30 minutes) Use this time to react to Chapters 5 and 6. Here are some possible discussion questions, but feel free to use your own.
 - a. Brooke said, "These experiences made a crack in my faith. The fear and doubt had left place for Satan to creep in and plant more seeds of fear and doubt. I struggled for weeks. I was fearful to even leave the house. I cried in the shower asking God, why I felt so lost. Why didn't I feel like myself? Why was I so fearful? I lived fearful something was going to happen to me or my kids or my husband." Have you ever felt like your experiences made a crack in your faith that only seemed to grow? What might you have said to Brooke if you had known her during this time? What scriptures might speak to Brooke's situation?
 - b. How does understanding God's continual presence and his promises help you to reconcile the hurts of living with your faith?
4. (3-5 minutes) Assign the reading for next week. Participants should read Chapter 7 and answer the "Your Voice" questions.
5. (5-10 minutes) Close in prayer. Share new requests and follow up on previous requests. Pray for God to reveal his love in a fresh way to each group member and for members to understand how to communicate God's love to those who have broken pieces. Pray for healing for the hurts that come from natural causes.

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Week Six:

1. (10-15 minutes) Open with prayer. Ask people to share their general reactions to the reading.
2. (20-30 minutes) Use this time to go over the discussion questions from Chapter 7 of the book. Also, feel free to ask participants to react to thoughts, ideas, and stories from this chapter.
 - a. Have you ever made a mistake (or multiple mistakes) that caused you to feel God's love could not apply to your life?
 - b. What are some tangible ways you feel God demonstrates his love to people? List as many as you can.
 - c. Do you recognize any of the things you (or others in the group) have listed in number two in your own life?
 - d. Do you believe that God loves **you** personally? Why or why not?
 - e. What in particular stood out to you in this part of the book? Why?
3. (3-5 minutes) Assign next week's reading. Participants should read Chapters 8 and 9.
4. (5-10 minutes) Close in prayer. Share new requests and follow up on previous requests. Pray for God to reveal his love in a fresh way to each group member and for members to understand how to communicate God's love to those who have broken pieces. Pray for healing for the hurts that come from the damages we cause.

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Week Seven:

1. (10-15 minutes) Open with prayer. Ask people to share their general reactions to the reading.
2. (3-5 minutes) Watch the author's online video for Part 3.
3. (20-30 minutes) Use this time react to thoughts, ideas, and stories from Chapters 8 and 9. Here are some possible questions:
 - a. Tamara says, "My life from the age of 15 to 22 was nothing but one horribly painful mistake after the other. Each one, whether it was something stupid done in a drunken or drug-induced stupor or another man I let take full advantage of me, left me feeling dirty, disgusting, and completely unworthy of Christ's love and affection." What might you have said to Tamara if you had known her at this time? What scriptures might speak to her situation?
 - b. What does unconditional love mean? What scripture from the reading resonated with you most? Why?
 - c. What in particular stood out to you in this part of the book? Why?
4. (3-5 minutes) Assign next week's reading. Participants should read Chapter 10.
5. (5-10 minutes) Close in prayer. Share new requests and follow up on previous requests. Pray for God to reveal his love in a fresh way to each group member and for members to understand how to communicate God's love to those who have broken pieces. Pray for healing for the hurts that come from the damages we cause.

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Week Eight:

1. (10-15 minutes) Open with prayer. Ask people to share their general reactions to the reading.
2. (20-30 minutes) Use this time react to thoughts, ideas, and stories from Chapter 10. Here are some possible questions:
 - a. Do you (or have you) viewed the broken areas of your life as hindrances to being able to serve God?
 - b. Have your broken areas helped you to relate to others?
 - c. What value is there in a broken hallelujah?
 - d. What in particular stood out to you in this part of the book? Why?
3. (3-5 minutes) Assign next week's reading. Participants should read Chapter 11.
4. (5-10 minutes) Close in prayer. Share new requests and follow up on previous requests. Pray for God to reveal his love in a fresh way to each group member and for members to understand how to communicate God's love to those who have broken pieces. Pray for God to reveal the value of our broken hallelujahs to each of us individually.

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Week Nine:

1. (10-15 minutes) Open with prayer. Ask people to share their general reactions to the reading.
2. (20-30 minutes) Use this time react to thoughts, ideas, and stories from Chapter 11. Here are some possible questions:
 - a. Kristi had experienced the brokenness from all three areas discussed in this book, and she was feeling as though she did not want to continue living. Have you ever felt this way? What might you have said to Kristi if you had known her at that time? What scriptures might apply to her situation?
 - b. How did God demonstrate unfailing, present, and unconditional love in Kristi's story?
 - c. How does Kristi's story demonstrate the value of the brokenness Rebecca experienced? How are the two stories tied together?
 - d. What in particular stood out to you in this part of the book? Why?
3. (3-5 minutes) Assign next week's reading. Participants should read the section "Your Broken Hallelujah."
4. (5-10 minutes) Close in prayer. Share new requests and follow up on previous requests. Pray for God to reveal his love in a fresh way to each group member and for members to understand how to communicate God's love to those who have broken pieces. Pray for God to reveal the value of our broken hallelujahs to each of us individually.

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Week Ten:

1. (10-15 minutes) Open with prayer. Ask people to share their general reactions to the reading.
2. (15-20 minutes) Talk briefly about the final section, "Your Broken Hallelujah." Challenge each participant to write some of their own story down, and provide about 15 minutes of quiet time for them to do so. I recommend providing participants with paper and something to write with. I also suggest playing some worship music as participants write.
3. (15-20 minutes) Take some time to allow participants to share portions of their writing, thoughts they had while writing, or other discussion topics related to the study and the activity.
4. (5-10 minutes) Pray that God will give you each a voice to sing your own hallelujah, however broken it may be.