

Our Broken Hallelujahs 5 or 6 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 all of Part 1 and answer the questions in their books. There are three chapters in Part 1. Each chapter will probably take less than 15 minutes to read.
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. (3-5 minutes) Watch the author's online video for Part 1.
3. (20-30 minutes) Use this time to go over the discussion questions from Part 1 of the book. Also, feel free to ask participants to react to thoughts, ideas, and stories from this section and how they related to them personally.
 - 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?
4. (3-5 minutes) Assign next week's reading. Participants should read all of Part 2 and answer the questions in their books.
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 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 2.
3. (20-30 minutes) Use this time to go over the discussion questions from Part 2 of the book. 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?
4. (3-5 minutes) Assign next week's reading. Participants should read all of Part 3 and answer the questions in their books.
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 Four:

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 to go over the discussion questions from Part 3 of the book. 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 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?
4. (3-5 minutes) Assign next week's reading. Participants should read the conclusion. If your group is participating in a 5 week study, the section "Your Broken Hallelujah" should also be read this week.
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 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 the conclusion.
3. (20-30 minutes) Use this time to react to the conclusion (and "Your Broken Hallelujah" if this is your final week). Here are some possible discussion questions, but feel free to use your own.
 - 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 good is your broken hallelujah?
 - d. What in particular stood out to you in this part of the book? Why?
4. (3-5 minutes) If this is a six week session, assign next week's reading. Participants should read the section "Your Broken Hallelujah."
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 God to reveal the value of our broken hallelujahs to each of us individually.

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Week Six:

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.