

REFLECTION GUIDE

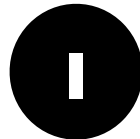
AUGUST 23



REFLECTION GUIDE

FOR FAMILIES, INDIVIDUALS, & SMALL GROUPS

REFLECT.



Have you ever received a letter
that was strength making,
challenging, encouraging,
and that reminded you that God is present?

DESCRIBE THAT LETTER

(or conversation or message, etc...).



THINK ABOUT THESE WORD PICTURES:

God's plans are like a tree root cracking through the concrete

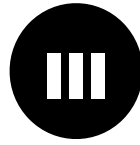
[Sadness and hurt] are raw construction material for God to build God's way in the world.

God never cooks a meal for one person.

Hope is energy transfer...a power source.

WHICH IMAGE RESONATES THE MOST WITH YOU RIGHT NOW, AND WHY?





*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord.
“Plans to prosper you, not to harm you,
to give you a future and a hope.”
(Jeremiah 29:11)*

**WHEN YOU READ THE WORDS OF JEREMIAH’S LETTER TO HIS PEOPLE
WHO WERE SUFFERING GRIEF AND LOSS IN EXILE,
HOW DO YOU FEEL?**

**WHAT IS IT LIKE TO KNOW WHAT
YOUR FAITH ANCESTORS WENT THROUGH
AND HOW GOD’S PLANS CAME THROUGH?**

IMAGINE.

When you imagine experiencing that you are fully loved, forgiven, and free, when you imagine the fear falling away, when you imagine accepting God’s plan for your life, and Jesus being the center of your life....

WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

Imagine it in vivid detail, and take some time to describe it with words (out loud or in a journal or draw a picture and explain it to someone).

Describe how you will be thinking, feeling,
and what you will be doing
when that is fully realized in your life.



EXPRESS.

*Isaiah talks about God comforting all who mourn and bestowing on them
“a crown of beauty instead of ashes” (61:2-3).*

*The song “Beautiful Things” picks up on that theme:
“You make beautiful things out of dust...
You make beautiful things out of us”*

EXPRESS YOURSELF TO GOD.

Take some ashes,
and use your fingers
to make a drawing with them
on a piece of paper.

Or use a charcoal pencil if you have one.

Or draw in the dirt or the sand.

Or plant a seed.

As you create something out of ashes or dirt,
pray that God will bring alive
the things in your heart
that are dead and dusty.

God is making you new.
Express that.

Spend some time nurturing that prayer with your hands in dirt or ashes.

