

Sermon-Based Small Group Bible Study

Join the Journey: Generational Faithfulness (Psalm 71)

Open

Select one of these “ice breakers” to get the conversation going toward the study.

- Whether you are or were a college student or not, what is your favorite college sports team, and why?
- Who did you look up to when you were fifteen? Who do you look up to now?
- What was an experience that helped make you the person you are today?

Dig

After reading Psalm 71:1–24 together, discuss these questions.

1. This psalm and others like it were written to reflect on the experience of Israel’s struggle as a small nation with big enemies and of figures like David and Elijah in facing ruthless, deadly enemies. What parts of the text seem to you to fit those situations well?
2. Name some of this psalm’s statements about God. What does the psalm emphasize about God? What is God like as he is celebrated here?
3. How would you describe the attitude of the psalmist as expressed here? Frightened? Worried? Hopeful? Confident? A combination?
4. Look closely at verses 17–18 and their contrast between youth and old age. What happens between youth and old age that makes faith a challenge? What happens that can make faith stronger?
5. What do you see the psalmist promising God in this psalm? Is the psalmist going to do God a favor? What do you think motivates these promises? When they’re carried out, what will the promised actions accomplish?

Summary: Whether our “enemies” are public or private, persons or circumstances, they can rattle our confidence and our faith in God. But God never abandons his people, even if he does not always act in the way we would prescribe. We can draw on the past experiences of others as well as our own to be reminded of God’s faithfulness and power to deliver his people. In so doing, we have a story to tell others, inspiring their own faith and confidence in God.

Reflect

Use any of these prompts to encourage group members to apply the text to their own experiences.

- If you are or were a university student, name some of the sources of stress and worry that students experience. If not, name some sources of stress in your life as a young adult. Compare them to sources of stress later in life, if that’s your situation now. How are those like the “enemies” in Psalm 71?
- What are some ways that you experienced or are experiencing God’s provision and deliverance as a young adult? If you are no longer a young adult, compare how you experience God’s provision and deliverance now.

- What do you find hardest about trusting God in times of trouble? What do you find reassuring from this Psalm? From your previous experiences of God's help?
- Pastor Bryan challenged us from this text to leave a spiritual legacy with other. Who has left a spiritual legacy with you? What has that come to mean to you? How might God be calling you now to leave a spiritual legacy with other?

Pray

Invite the group to pray together using any of these suggestions.

- What needs have you heard from others in the group that we can pray about?
- What is a stressor that you or someone close to you is experiencing right now, and how can we ask God to provide in that situation?
- Reflecting on God's faithfulness to you in the past, what thanks do you want to offer to God right now?