



THE  
COURAGE  
TO RISE  
ABOVE

# FAITH UNDER FIRE

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

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## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

### OVERVIEW

**TRAILER: [FAITHUNDERFIREFILM.COM](http://FAITHUNDERFIREFILM.COM)**

After an exhausting night saving a young girl from a raging house fire, Fireman Tom Hatcher is at the end of his rope. He couldn't save his wife from cancer - and worse yet - his six year old daughter, Tiffany, is now facing the same possible fate.

When he finds himself in a cold jail cell after attacking a pastor out of frustration with a seemingly absent God, Tom begins to reflect on his downward spiral into despair. But with the help and persistent friendship of the very man he assaulted, Tom is challenged to face his grief and embrace faith in the darkest hours of his life.

This five-session small group discussion guide will walk you through Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, which reflects on the many balances of times and seasons God ordained for this life, as Tom comes to learn throughout FAITH UNDER FIRE. It will also encourage you to remember that God can use both the upbeat and challenging seasons of life to grow and shape us to be more like Him.

Each session includes a clip from FAITH UNDER FIRE, a short devotional, several Scripture passages, and discussion questions that will give you the opportunity to reflect on your own seasons of life and on what God may be teaching you through each period.

You can see FAITH UNDER FIRE in select theaters on November 27th!  
See [faithunderfirefilm.com](http://faithunderfirefilm.com) for more information.

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### SESSION I: ECCLESIASTES 3:1

#### SESSION I CLIPS: [WATCH HERE](#)

Have you ever wished you could skip past a challenging period or “season” of your life? As humans, it can be hard for us to embrace the less enjoyable times since we do not see them from God’s broader heavenly perspective. However, God does not waste a moment, and each season He allows us to experience offers us the opportunity to learn and grow. Christians are not promised an easy life, as Ecclesiastes 3 shows, but one that comes with growth. And with growth comes growing pains. And, in the growing and the pain, God is with us and offers us His strength and sustaining presence when we feel like we cannot walk through a season on our own.

In FAITH UNDER FIRE, Tom Hatcher is in the midst of his own heavy, challenging time. And yet, God is with him and draws him closer to Himself. God even places and uses people in Tom’s life, like Pastor Dan Underwood, to remind him that God is in control.

As we journey together through Ecclesiastes 3 over the next five sessions, we will examine our lives to determine what season we are in and what we can learn from each moment.

Now is your moment to invite God into your season. Ask Him what He wants you to learn. Dedicate this time to Him, and ask Him to reveal His truths to you this week.

#### SCRIPTURES:

- Job 14:5
- Ecclesiastes 3:1
- Romans 8:28

#### TALK IT OVER:

1. Do you ever feel like the varying times in your life could be described as seasons? Describe your current season.
2. What has been the hardest phase of your life? What has been the best?
3. How can you embrace every season, including the hardest ones?

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### SESSION 2: ECCLESIASTES 3:2-3

#### SESSION 2 CLIPS: [WATCH HERE](#)

The ability to recognize your current season of life and the changing of seasons is a learned art. On our own, we are not capable of knowing when God is leading us in or out of a certain season; but, when we seek to listen to God and His wisdom, we will grow in our ability to hear His voice and better understand His divine patterns. But, as Pastor Dan Underwood shared in today's film clip, God may not answer us in our "perfect" timing. However, we can trust that He will always give us exactly what we need and will use and continue to grow us if we are willing to let Him!

In Ecclesiastes 3:2-3, we learn that there is a time to settle down and a time to uproot. As we learned last session, God does not want us to miss opportunities to grow in Him. While staying planted somewhere/ in something longer than we should might be comfortable, it might result in us missing something even better. Sometimes taking a step of faith to uproot, in God's timing, can be scary, but the rewarding harvest is worth the growing pains.

In the same way, there is a proper, God-ordained time for things to die/ be killed/torn down. When something in our lives is toxic, like a non-life-giving habit or relationship, there is a time for it to fade away. Still, there is also a time to persist and persevere, and we must seek God's wisdom to know how to balance the building up and tearing down.

#### SCRIPTURES:

- Proverbs 2:6
- Ecclesiastes 3:2-3
- James 1:5, 3:17

#### TALK IT OVER:

1. Why is it helpful for us to recognize what season we are in?
2. What is one time you heard God tell you to uproot vs. plant? What did you do?
3. What is one example of how you have seen God give someone something better when they gave up what they had been holding onto too tightly?

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### SESSION 3: ECCLESIASTES 3:4-5

#### SESSION 3 CLIPS: [WATCH HERE](#)

It has been said that comedic actors make the best dramatic actors. Why? Because, as comedians, these actors are trained in the art of comedic timing. They recognize a “beat” and seize the comedic moment. In dramatic acting, these emotional beats can be subtler, making them harder to recognize, but a comedic actor has an intuition, learned or natural, to recognize the rhythm and lean into the beats. In the same way, learning how to navigate the rhythms of joy and sadness, both in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones, can take time and practice.

In FAITH UNDER FIRE, Tom Hatcher is grieving the loss of his beloved wife, Sara. In today’s film clip, Tom explains how he feels like no one understands what he is going through. Tom does not want to be “cheered up” or “fixed” when he is still deeply mourning Sara. As we read in Job 2:13, sometimes what a mourning friend needs is someone to simply sit quietly with them in the mourning, like Pastor Dan Underwood offering his friendship to Tom. In the same way, a well-placed moment of joy can be much needed and can lighten and feed one’s soul.

As we walk with friends in their grief, or even in our own grief, let us seek to learn the needed rhythms and beats of weeping and mourning, laughing and dancing, bringing comfort and support either way.

#### SCRIPTURES:

- Job 2:13
- Proverbs 17:22
- Ecclesiastes 3:4-5

#### TALK IT OVER:

1. What is one trial/hard season you have walked through with a friend? How did that friend mourn with you?
2. What is one encouraging season you have walked through with a friend? How did that friend rejoice with you?
3. How can you mourn and rejoice well with your friends?

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### SESSION 4: ECCLESIASTES 3:6-7

#### SESSION 4 CLIPS: [WATCH HERE](#)

Stubbornness can be both a strength and a weakness. Resilience—having the self-control and strength from God to persevere boldly—is a powerful, vital characteristic, but being unwilling to give up ultimate control to God is ultimately a prideful poison. If we always keep searching and never give up or throw away, we will never have the chance to learn from what God will offer us when we submit things to Him. If we never fully give up control and rely on God to supernaturally intervene, we miss out on experiencing His power as He faithfully meets us in our humility. The world may think that strength comes from a human source, but Christians know that true strength comes from God and an unwavering reliance on His ultimate empowerment. As Christians, let us recognize where human strength and power end and Divine strength continues, and let us remember to surrender every season to God.

There is also a time to listen and a time to speak up. God knows each of His creations better than we will ever know ourselves. As a result, He knows when our hearts are prepared to process things and if we are ready to receive correction and feedback. Sometimes we need to be listened to (or listen to others), and sometimes we need someone to speak a word from God to us (or to speak a word to others). Speaking up boldly for truth is vital, but sometimes silence is louder and equally necessary. Ask God to help you discern this week when you should listen and when you should speak up.

#### SCRIPTURES:

- Proverbs 18:13
- Ecclesiastes 3:6-7
- James 1:19

#### TALK IT OVER:

1. What is one thing you need to surrender to God? How do you feel about that?
2. What motivates you to persevere in something instead of surrendering it to God? How do you know when to search and when to give up?
3. In what scenarios is it hard for you to discern if you should speak up or be silent?

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### SESSION 5: ECCLESIASTES 3:8

#### SESSION 5 CLIPS: [WATCH HERE](#)

The God that Christians serve is a God of order. "As we have read over the past sessions, God has given each thing its proper time and place

In today's reading, we are reminded that there is even a time for hate. While this might sound surprising or contradictory, it is important to remember that, as Christians who desire to model our lives after Christ, we should not hesitate to hate evil. While God loves the people He created, that does not mean that He does not hate some of the choices we make. Like a good Father, God is troubled by poor decisions we make, all because He sees us from a place of love, knowing our potential and wanting the very best for us.

As Christians, our moral compass and center should be oriented around God and His just laws. As a result, everything we do should come from our core, centered around God's heart. Thus, when we hate something (and not someone), it is because it hurts God's heart, and our heart is growing to be more like His everyday, with His help.

There is also a time for war and a time for peace. Oftentimes, the most battles we face as Christians are ones fought in our minds. Ephesians 6:12 tells us that our battle is not ultimately against other humans, but a spiritual battle rife with spiritual warfare. God has equipped us with every divine weapon we need to fight these battles, but we must also remember to be still and ultimately surrender every battle to Him who is our strength and core.

Is your faith under fire due to a particularly hard season? Lean into God, allow Him to love you through people He has placed in your life, and ask Him what you can learn through this.

#### SCRIPTURES:

- Psalm 46:10
- Ecclesiastes 3:8
- Romans 12:9
- Ephesians 6:10-18

#### TALK IT OVER:

1. Reflect on your Session 1 answer regarding your current season. Has your answer changed at all since you first answered? Why/why not?
2. What are you learning from your current season? Why might God be allowing you to experience it?



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