



Bad News Antidote

Psalm 146 | Session 10.36

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Start by asking:

- What situation or event is the most discussed in your household right now and why?
- What can you share with us that you are trying the hardest to *not* talk about and why?
- What are some situations that have tested your understanding of God and your desire to keep following?
- What keeps you going in the midst of those times?
- What or who has reminded you to keep trusting and keep following?

Content

Read Psalm 146, and watch the Bible Background Video before asking:

- What do you think it means to tell your soul to praise God? (You may want to read this verse in other translations to get some ideas.)
- Why do you think the Psalmist seems so confident that he will continue to praise God his whole life?
- What kind of "trust" should we not place in powerful people or other human beings?
- How will placing trust in God instead of people affect the way we make decisions and approach relationships?
- What things does the Psalmist credit God with doing?
- To what degree is the Psalmist talking about miracles he's seen during his lifetime versus some future time when God will make things right?
- How would the Psalmist see God's work as carried out by human beings?

Closure

Continue by asking:

- What difference does it make if God's work, as described in this Psalm, is being done by people who do not call themselves "Christian?"
- In what ways does our understanding of the reasons why people help others change the way we see the whole Psalm?
- What core principles do we express when we sing songs based upon this psalm or otherwise recite it?
- Even though this psalm is millennia old, and an expression of someone who practiced a different faith, at what points is it relevant to our faith in the Twenty-first Century?
- How have you recently experienced or seen God working as the psalm describes?
- What can we do to ensure that this psalm continues to ring true in our lifetimes?

Conclude by reading the Psalm aloud together. and encourage the group to consider using this as a passage for personal reflection this week. Close with prayer.

Writer: Jon Parks



CURRENT

session page

Bad News Antidote

Psalm 146 | Session 10.36

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Thoroughly review all the referenced resources for this session in advance.
- Encourage your group to listen to the FaithElement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)

Context

Tell the group that *"No matter the week or the day, it is not hard finding conflict between Christians on what kind of stands they should be taking on politically charged issues."* Then share [this story](#) and [this one](#) on opposite sides of an issue

Ask:

- As Christians, how do we reconcile the actions of our leaders who seem to follow or not follow Christ's teachings?
- In what ways does it affect the ability of non-Christians to listen to our message when they see Christians not able to agree on basic principles of caring for others?
- What other examples can you think of that demonstrate this conflict?
- Given our inherent weaknesses, why do we persist in putting faith in human leaders instead of following God's commands?

Content

Read [Psalm 146](#), and watch the Bible Background Video for this session.

Continue by asking:

- Where does the Psalmist clarify what we are to do, who is happy, and what the Lord will do?
- What might have inspired the different sections of this psalm?
- Who do you think of when hearing the Psalmist talk about setting free, upholding the orphans and widows, and ruining the wicked?
- If this psalm was a popular contemporary song, where would you most expect to hear it played and why?

Closure

Share "One of Us" and ask:

- Assuming that we know that God expects us to stand for something, in what ways could seeing our fellow human beings as reflections of God help us to make bold decisions?
- If the Psalmist is so clear on our limitations and who the Lord supports, why is it so hard today to do that, especially as Christians?
- What changes do we need to make in our walk in Christ to follow these principles?
- If "God is where we see justice at work in the world." as Nikki says, where is God at work in our lives and where is God calling us to take part in God's work of loving the world?

Close with a prayer.

Writers: Crystal Shepherd and Steve McClain



MYSTIC
session page

Bad News Antidote

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Before the Session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Materials Needed: markers, writing paper, pens, four poster papers titled: *What is happening today*; *What God does (taken from the psalm)*; *What humans are doing or can do to cooperate with God's work*; *What humans are doing or can do to hinder God's work*
- Encourage your group to listen to the FaithElement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)

Context

Read aloud [Psalm 146](#) then share the Bible Background Video.

This is an "active reflection" activity.

Reflection

Invite the group to make a list of the most talked-about things that are happening in the world and their lives today, placing their responses on a poster or white board. Follow that by inviting the group to make additions to the second list (from the psalm), of where they see such things either happening or needing to happen.

After a few minutes, Invite the group to consider the other posters, placing their responses to them as they will, in graffiti style. When the posters are completed, invite the group to a time of silent reflection based on the following prompts (you might want to print these on a poster or handout) with a pause between each:

- Spend a few moments acknowledging God's presence with us.
- Invite God to reveal connections between the posters and your own life.
- What thoughts and feelings surface as you review them?
- What might you be doing to hinder God's work?
- What might you consider doing or not doing in order to cooperate with God's work?
- What questions do the posters raise for you?
- Share your thoughts and feelings with God.
- Listen for God's response, if any.

Invite volunteers to share their insights with the group, then close with prayer.

Writer: Joy Yee



MEDIA
session page

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- Encourage your group to listen to the FaithElement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Show the [Ballad of Mark Stuart](#) (be aware: this video is very useful, but it is 9 minutes) and/or the [Hands and Feet video](#), then ask:

- What would it be like to be professional singer and lose the ability to sing?
- How much do you think he questioned God when he could no longer be leader of a band when he had done that most of his adult life?
- What would cause Mark Stuart to press on with caring for poor children in Haiti after playing shows to large crowds?
- In what ways do you think he finds fulfillment now as opposed to the time when he was a singer?

Content

Read [Psalm 146](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

- Why do you think the psalmist calls on others and themselves to praise the Lord to start things?
- How challenging is seriously praising the Lord for us and why?
- In what ways does the writer insist that God is better than humans?
- How do you feel about the leaders you've grown to trust when you read this psalm,, and why?
- Why does the psalmist believe God is trustworthy?
- How do you feel about the psalmist's reasoning about dealing with bad things happening?

Closure

Continue by asking:

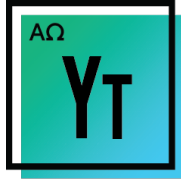
- What do you think this is the psalmist's answer to the question: "Why God?"
- How do you see the message of this scripture playing out in our times?

Play the [Kings and Queens music video](#) and ask:

- Where is God in that video?
- How do you find God in a place of poverty and potential depression?
- What does the psalm and this video tell your group about their place in a world full of pain and suffering?
- If the song or psalm is calling Christians to do or be something, what is that?

Close in prayer.

Writer: Jon Self



YOUTH
session page

Bad News Antidote

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Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Listen to the FaithElement podcast for this session.
- Use the social media prompts on this session's web page to help youth begin engaging the session them ahead of their gathering.

Intro

Show the [Mad TV clip](#) and ask:

- How does this clip make you feel and why?
- When have you tried to do something where nothing seemed to go right?
- How do you react when your plans fall apart and why?
- When you look at what is going on in the world, where does it seem like things are falling apart?

Context

Play a game from "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" called Press Conference, where you have a volunteer leave the room while the rest of the group comes up with some kind of accomplishment by that person. It needs to be creative and totally made up, like "invented the high five" or "managed to place 23 large marshmallows in their mouth while playing 'Chubby Bunny'." Have the volunteer come back in the room and give a press conference answering questions from the other people.

The fun of this activity is that the group knows the accomplishment, but the person giving the press conference does not, so the questions can have some pretty bizarre answers. The group can ask specific questions eventually leading them in the right direction to figure out their accomplishment.

Play as many rounds as time allows, then ask:

- How did it feel to play this game and why?
- How did you figure out what you had accomplished?
- When have you done something that resulted in praise from other people?
- When have you done something that no one really noticed, but you were very proud of?
- What feels different about doing something for God rather than yourself?

Content

Read Psalm 146, then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask:

- Why does the writer of this psalm put his trust in the Lord?
- Why is it so hard to put our trust in God when bad things are happening in our world?
- In what ways does this psalm answer those who question where God was when bad things happen?

- According to this passage, how does God take care of those who are most vulnerable?
- In what ways is caring for others the work of God, or the work of people?
- What is the relationship between praising God and doing the things that we praise God for getting done?

Closure

Play "Hands and Feet" and ask:

- How do you think God chooses to work in this world?
- What happens if God's people choose not to be God's hands and feet?
- In what ways do you see God's people following Jesus with their actions?
- How fair is it to say that a person's actions show you the measure of that person's faith?
- At what points does doing the work of God help you connect more closely to God?
- In what ways can we improve the world around us and cause the change God wants in this world?

Close this session in prayer.

Writer: Don Breeden



MIX
session page

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- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context (From the Mind Session Page)

Start by asking:

- What situation or event is the most discussed in your household right now and why?
- What can you share with us that you are trying the hardest to *not* talk about and why?
- What are some situations that have tested your understanding of God and your desire to keep following?
- What keeps you going in the midst of those times?
- What or who has reminded you to keep trusting and keep following?

Content (From the Media Session Page)

Read [Psalm 146](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

- Why do you think the psalmist calls on others and themselves to praise the Lord to start things?
- How challenging is seriously praising the Lord for us and why?
- In what ways does the writer insist that God is better than humans?
- How do you feel about the leaders you've grown to trust when you read this psalm,, and why?
- Why does the psalmist believe God is trustworthy?
- How do you feel about the psalmist's reasoning about dealing with bad things happening?

Closure (From the Current Session Page)

Share "[One of Us](#)" and ask:

- Assuming that we know that God expects us to stand for something, in what ways could seeing our fellow human beings as reflections of God help us to make bold decisions?
- If the Psalmist is so clear on our limitations and who the Lord supports, why is it so hard today to do that, especially as Christians?
- What changes do we need to make in our walk in Christ to follow these principles?
- If "God is where we see justice at work in the world." as Nikki says, where is God at work in our lives and where is God calling us to take part in God's work of loving the world?

Close with a prayer.