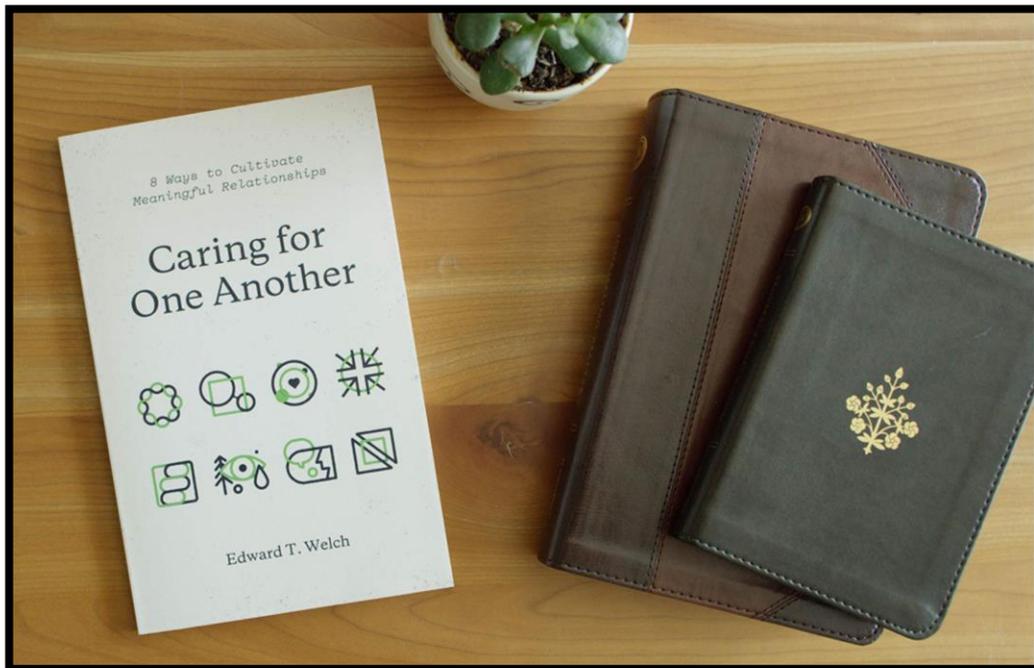




cultivating
CHRISTIAN
community

8-Week Group Guide

This discussion guide
is designed to be used with the resource
“Caring for One Another”
by Edward T. Welch



It may be purchased at christianbook.com for \$6.99.

You may listen to the book on *Audible* for \$4.99.

You may also use the video resources for this study
created by your FMC Pastors
on the *FMC YouTube Channel*

8-WEEK SCHEDULE

February – March 2021

WEEK 1 – Life is Hard and We are Complex

DIRECTIONS: Use this discussion guide

WEEK 2 – Sin is Heavy but God is good

DIRECTIONS: Use this discussion guide

- Begin “*Caring for One Another*” book, audiobook or FMC videos -

WEEK 3 – With All Humility

DIRECTIONS: Use Chapter 1 or Video 1

WEEK 4 – Move Toward Others

DIRECTIONS: Use Chapter 2 or Video 2

WEEK 5 – Know the Heart & Influences

DIRECTIONS: Use Chapters 3-4 or Video 3

WEEK 6 – Be Personal & Pray

DIRECTIONS: Use Chapter 5 or Video 4

WEEK 7 – Talk about Suffering

DIRECTIONS: Use Chapter 6 or Video 5

WEEK 8 – Talk about Sin & Grow Together

DIRECTIONS: Use Chapters 7-8 or Video 6



WEEK 1: *Life is Hard*

2 CORINTHIANS 6:4-10 (ESV)

⁴ As servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand

and for the left; ⁸through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

- 1) How do you relate to some of the life experiences of Paul?
- 2) What would you say has been one of the hardest moments in your life? Why? Share a story. We will keep this confidential among the group.
- 3) How do hard moments affect your body, thoughts, emotions, relationships or walk with Jesus?
- 4) Why is it hard for you to ask people for help?

WEEK 1 *continued*

AND WE ARE COMPLEX

PROVERBS 30:1-9 (ESV)

¹The man declares, I am weary, O God; I am weary, O God, and worn out. ²Surely I am too stupid to be a man. I have not the understanding of a man. ³I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One. ⁴Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name? Surely you know! ⁵Every word of

God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. ⁶Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar. ⁷Two things I ask of you; deny them not to me before I die: ⁸Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, ⁹lest I be full and deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

- 1) What does the Scripture writer say about himself? How do you relate?

"Ah, our hearts. A swirling mass of passions, pains, preferences, imaginations, moral commitments or lack of them, and at the center of it all, affecting absolutely everything, is our relationship with God."

- Edward T. Welch

- 2) Share a story about how God can impact a person's life.
- 3) Since God loved first, who can you move toward to show God's love?

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER



WEEK 2: *Sin is heavy*

SCRIPTURE READINGS

PROVERBS 6:16-19 (ESV)

¹⁶There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: ¹⁷haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, ¹⁸a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, ¹⁹a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

MARK 7:20-22 (ESV)

²⁰And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.”

DISCUSS TOGETHER

- 1) Where do you see yourself described in Scripture passages above?
- 2) Do you believe external circumstances are more serious than lingering sin within you? Why or why not?

“If we believe that the circumstances of life are more weighty than our sin, then the gospel of Jesus Christ will not sound very good because it does not alleviate much suffering. To sin is not good, but to see it is. Only when we remember that we needed to be rescued and need daily washing will forgiveness of sins seem especially sweet and sufficiently weighty to counterbalance the pains of life.” -

Edward T. Welch

- 3) Share about a time when God let you see the reality of your heart.

WEEK 2 *continued*

BUT GOD IS GOOD

PSALM 62:5-8 (ESV)

⁵For God alone, O my soul, wait in silence, for my hope is from him. ⁶He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. ⁷On God rests my salvation and my glory; my mighty rock, my refuge is God. ⁸Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.

PSALM 103:1-13 (ESV)

103 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! ²Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, ³who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, ⁴who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, ⁵who satisfies you with good so that your

youth is renewed like the eagle's. ⁶The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. ⁷He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. ⁸The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. ⁹He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. ¹⁰He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; ¹²as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. ¹³As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.

- 1) What do these passages say about God?
- 2) When do you tell God that you need His help?
- 3) What motivates you to move away from God? What motivates you to move toward Him?

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER



WEEK 3: *With All Humility*

SCRIPTURE READING

“Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’”

1 PETER 5:5b (ESV)



DIRECTIONS: Read/listen to “*Caring for One Another*” Chapter 1 or watch *Video 1* from the FMC YouTube

DISCUSS TOGETHER

- 1) Have you ever asked another person to pray for you? How did it go?
- 2) In God’s Kingdom, we are commanded to depend upon both the Lord and other Christians. How do you show your neediness to others? What holds you back from such vulnerability?
- 3) Who might you ask to pray for you?

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER



WEEK 4: *Move Toward Others*

SCRIPTURE READING

“We love because He first loved us.”

1 JOHN 4:19 (ESV)



DIRECTIONS: Read/listen to “*Caring for One Another*” Chapter 2
or watch *Video 2* from the FMC YouTube

DISCUSS TOGETHER

- 1) Share a story of a time when someone took a genuine interest in your life? How did that person do it? How was it encouraging to you about that?
- 2) We hope to be motivated by how Jesus has treated us. How would you say that Jesus has pursued you?
- 3) How do you hope to make the first move today and this week?

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER



WEEK 5: *The Heart & Influences*

SCRIPTURE READING

*“He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes”*

JEREMIAH 17:8a (ESV)

DIRECTIONS: Read/listen to “*Caring for One Another*” Chapters 3-4
or watch *Video 3* from the FMC YouTube

DISCUSS TOGETHER

- 1) How are people like trees?
- 2) How do these questions help you better understand your heart?
What do you love? What makes you happy? What motivates you?
What makes you sad? What makes you angry? What makes you fear?
- 3) What prominent influences in your life have helped you grow in the Lord?
- 4) Why is seeing and verbally acknowledging the good in others important for building authentic relationships?
- 5) How has knowing the particulars about someone’s physical weaknesses contributed to your patience and love for them?

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER



WEEK 6: *Be Personal & Pray*

SCRIPTURE READING

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy.”

PSALM 103:2-4 (ESV)

DIRECTIONS: Read/listen to “*Caring for One Another*” Chapter 5
or watch *Video 4* from the FMC YouTube

DISCUSS TOGETHER

- 1) Share a story of when someone really listening to you? What did they do?
- 2) God’s heart is moved by His people. We want to be moved by the pleasures and hardships of those we love. How do these realities affect how you pray?
- 3) The movement from *knowing others* to *praying with them* face-to-face can be either awkward or very hard. Why do you think that is often the case?
- 4) What are some ways to affectively and Biblically pray for the whole person?

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER



WEEK 7: *Talk About Suffering*

SCRIPTURE READING

*“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;*

PSALM 23:4a (ESV)

DIRECTIONS: Read/listen to “*Caring for One Another*” Chapter 6
or watch *Video 5* from the FMC YouTube

DISCUSS TOGETHER

- 1) Have any particular Scripture passages about suffering become especially meaningful to you? Share it with one another.
- 2) There are problems like depression (or other common struggles) which are hard to find specifically addressed within Scripture. How are those real-life issues like walking in a ‘wilderness?’
- 3) How does remembering God’s faithful, abiding presence help you in showing compassion towards others?
- 3) How might you pray for someone who is in a season of ‘wilderness?’ What Scripture passages help you find the words to pray?

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER



WEEK 8: *Talk about Sin & Grow*

SCRIPTURE READING

*“Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another,
that you may be healed.”*

JAMES 5:16a (ESV)

DIRECTIONS: Read/listen to “*Caring for One Another*” Chapters 7-8
or watch *Video 6* from the FMC YouTube

DISCUSS TOGETHER

- 1) Has anyone ever spoken to you about your sin in a *helpful* way? How? ... in an *unhelpful* way? What lessons as that taught you?
- 2) If we love God and one another, there will be times when speaking about sin and temptations is necessary. We hope to do this better. What are some of the challenges that go along with this level of spiritual vulnerability?
- 3) What has been different in your relationships as a result of doing this study?
- 4) What’s next for you? How do you aspire to grow as a child of God who loves others and makes disciples in a way which reflects Jesus’ love and mission?

PRAY WITH ONE ANOTHER

