

Six Sessions by Pastor, Author, and International Conference Speaker

PAUL DAVID TRIPP

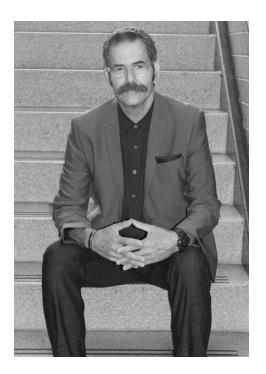
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul David Tripp is a pastor, author, and international conference speaker. He is the president of Paul Tripp Ministries and works to connect the transforming power of Jesus Christ to everyday life. This vision has led Paul to write many books on Christian living and travel around the world preaching and teaching. Paul's driving passion is to help people understand how the gospel of Jesus Christ speaks with practical hope into all the things people face in this broken world.

For additional resources, visit www.paultripp.com.

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A WORD OF WELCOME

You could argue that as a Christian woman, there are really only two ways of living: you either live for yourself, or you live as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of your sinful nature, your heart will be inclined to love yourself, serve yourself, and live for yourself. But God has called you to something radically different - to love Him, serve Him, and live for Him. You have been called to be an ambassador of the King of Kings.

In this 6-session study, you will learn what it looks like to be an ambassador. But before you can properly represent your King, you need to know who He is. This study will focus on the character of God and His plan of redemption. It will also focus on you - a sinner living among other sinners in a fallen world. This study will help you to evaluate the sinful tendencies of your heart and why it is a struggle to live everyday as an ambassasdor.

Although this curriculum can be completed as an individual, it is written as a group study to encourage discussion. It is recommended that you write down your thoughts and answers as you work through the material. This will be helpful for future reference or for personal reflection.

We also recommend selecting a leader (or co-leaders) who will facilate the study by asking questions. A note to the leader can be found on Page 26, although the principles discussed in that segment are helpful for everyone and could be read by all participants before beginning the curriculum.

Each session begins with an **Opening Discussion.** These questions or reflections should be discussed before playing the video, as they stimulate initial thoughts about the material that will be covered. The **Scripture Passage** and **Key Ideas** are simply included for reference, with room for **Notes** included.

Following the video session, the entire group should work through the **Review Questions**, which are designed to check for mutual understanding. Answers to these questions are immediately underneath, but they are simply suggested answers. This will naturally lead into the **Discussion Questions**, which encourage additional consideration of the material. There are no provided answers for these questions, as participants are encouraged to share their thoughts, opinions, and personal experiences with the group.

Finally, the **Applying What You Learned** and **Personal Reflection** sections can be used as "homework." These sections are designed to help you examine your own heart and apply the truths to your own life in concrete ways. These questions should be answered outside the meeting time.

May God bless and encourage you greatly as you work through this material. May you grow in your faith and boldness so that you are able to live like an ambassador for Christ, a woman helping other women.

God bless.

Paul David Tripp

Video Duration: 19:15

1. Uncomfortable Grace

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 1.

1. Share with the group your most difficult time of suffering and/or trial. Did you question (or feel tempted to question) the love of God? **NOTE:** Don't be afraid to admit to your weak faith; the first step to growing in faith is admitting that you have a faith that is weaker than it should be.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Mark 6:45-52

⁴⁵ Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶ And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. ⁴⁷ And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. ⁴⁸ And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, ⁵⁰ for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." ⁵¹ And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, ⁵² for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

- 1. The two most important questions we can ask are: "What in the world is God doing?" and "How in the world should I respond to it?"
- 2. God will take you where you haven't intended to go in order to produce in you what you couldn't achieve on your own it's called uncomfortable grace.
- 3. We are tempted to judge the faithfulness of God based on His ability to remove difficulty from our lives, when in fact, difficulty is almost always a sign of His faithfulness.

NOTES:	(additional room for notes on following page)

OTES:	
EVIEW QUESTIONS (continued on next page):	
1. How did the disciples get themselves into this difficult situation?	
2. What is the theology of uncomfortable grace?	
ncomfortable Grace - God will take you where you haven't intended to 80 in order to produce in you t you couldn't achieve on your own.	

1) It's a trick question - the disciples didn't get themselves into this mess because of arrogance or foolish decisions. Christ made the disciples to get into the boat (v. 45); Jesus placed His disciples in this situation.

REVIEW QUESTIONS (continued):

3. From this passage, how does Christ prove that He esteems the redemption of His disciples more than their comfort?

3) Christ made the disciples get into the boat and did not remove the difficulty from them when they were struggling; in fact, He intentionally brought about difficulty so they would learn important spiritual lessons.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1. Recall your answer to the **Opening Discussion** question ("share with the group your most difficult time of suffering and/or trial."). Why would God place you in that situation?
- 2. In what ways do we esteem personal comfort more than redemption?

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

1. Look back at the moment of difficulty you shared in the **Opening Discussion** (or, re-evaluate a moment of difficult that you're currently facing). How does the theology of uncomfortable grace change your perspective on suffering? Be prepared to share you answer at the beginning of Session 2.

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

How do I esteem comfort more than redemption in my everyday life? How do I respond when that comfort is removed from my life?



2. Amazement vs. Faith

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 2.

1. Share your reflections from the **Applying What You Learned** from Session 1. How does the theology of uncomfortable grace change your perspective on suffering?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Mark 6:45-52

⁴⁵ Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶ And after he had taken leave of them, he went up on the mountain to pray. ⁴⁷ And when evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. ⁴⁸ And he saw that they were making headway painfully, for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. He meant to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the sea they thought it was a ghost, and cried out, ⁵⁰ for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." ⁵¹ And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, ⁵² for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

- 1. Even though we have seen the glory of God already at work in our lives, we're still prone to panic and question God's love and faithfulness when an unexpected trial comes our way.
- 2. It's impossible for you to ever be in the storms of life by yourself because your life has been invaded by the great "I AM."
- 3. Sometimes we need the deep and dark storms of life to see the glory of God.
- 4. God is not willing to leave you simply amazed and astounded by His miracles; His goal is to transform you into a person of stury, assured, and hopeful faith.

NOTES:	(additional room for notes on following page)

NOTES:
REVIEW QUESTIONS:
1. When did Jesus start to show spiritual care for His disciples in this story?
2. Why is the difference between amazement and faith so significant for Christians?
2) We can be amazed by the work of God and still not live by faith. The disciples were continually astounded by the miracles of Christ but they still lived with hardened hearts.

I) Jesus started to show spiritual care for His disciples NOT when He calmed the storm and removed the difficulty, but when He sent them into the storm in the first place. God's spiritual care is not always going to be in the form of a cold drink or a soft pillow; God's spiritual care will always be "refining."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1. What difficult circumstances are you currently facing? Are you tempted to tell yourself that you're alone?
- 2. In those moments of difficulty, how can you remind yourself that you're not alone?
- 3. How can you bring hope to others who are in the midst of difficulty and trial?

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

1. Where have you seen the glory of God on display in your life in the past? Take time to meditate on the numerous occassions where God has revealed Himself to you in powerful ways. Write down these meditations so when future moments of difficultly arise, you can recall the presence, power, and faithfulness of God in your life. Pick one of the meditations to share with the group for the beginning of Session 3.

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Am I taking full advantage of the gift of grace, or am I content to only "play with the box?" Where do I need to invest my time and energy so that I am immersed in the work of Jesus Christ?



3. Preaching the Gospel to Yourself

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 3.

1. Share your answers from the **Applying What You Learned** from Session 2. When and how has God revealed His presence, power, and faithfulness to you in the past? How can you meditate on this during future (or present) moments of difficulty?

KEY IDEAS:

- 1. You're always preaching some kind of Gospel to yourself. No one is more influential in your life than you are because no one talks to you more than you do.
- 2. Biblical faith never requires you to deny reality; if you have to establish momentary personal hope by denying reality, you're not exercising biblical faith.
- 3. Peace in times of trouble begins with rich Scriptural theology.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

¹ The Lord is my light and my salvation;

Psalm 27:1-5

whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? ² When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. ³ Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident. ⁴ One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. ⁵ For he will hide me in his shelter

he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;

he will lift me high upon a rock.

in the day of trouble;

NOTES:		

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Why are you the most influential person in your life?
2. Why does biblical faith never require us to deny reality?
The Bible is shockingly honest and gloriously hopeful at the same time. It clearly teaches that sin has levastated our universe and that everything somehow, someway is affected by that devastation. We don't need to deny that we live a chaotic and troubled existence. But at the same time, the Bible teaches that Jesus will one day restore this world to its perfect order, and in the meantime, He has provided us everything we need to live and godly and peaceful life.
) No one talks to you as much as you do; you're always preaching some kind of Gospel to yourself. You are bility to accomplish what God has called you to do.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. What has happened to you in the past that tempted you to question the character and goodness of God? What did you tell yourself about God in that moment?
- 2. In what ways do human beings try to deny the reality of difficult situations? How have you tried to deny reality? Why are we tempted to deny the difficulty of our situation in front of our sisters in Christ?

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

1. Paul Tripp says, "Peace in times of trouble begins with rich scriptural theology." Write down some of your favorite Bible verses that help you medidate on the Lord in times of trouble. Remember that theology doesn't exist for the purpose of information; it exists for the purpose of personal transformation. How have some of these verses helped transform your heart in the midst of difficulty and trouble? Be prepared to share an example with the other participants at the beginning of Session 4.

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Am I currently denying the reality of my situation? Do I need to come out of hiding and honestly admit my struggles to someone in my church or someone in this small group?



4. The Lord is My...

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 4.

1. Share a verse (or some verses) that you wrote down for the **Applying What You Learned** homework from Session 3. How did those verses help you in times of difficulty and trouble?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Psalm 27:1-5

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh,

my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord

all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter
 in the day of trouble;
 he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
 he will lift me high upon a rock.

- 1. There exists in the universe a greater and more glorious beauty that is way more beautiful and way more glorious than any ugly thing you could face.
- 2. You will never view your troubles accurately and properly unless you look at them through the lens of the stunning beauty of the Lord.
- 3. If you only meditate on your trouble and not on the Lord, you will wrongly begin to take on your difficult experiences as your personal identity.
- 4. When trouble comes to your door, you need to do four things: Gaze, Remember, Rest, and Act.

NOTES:			

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Why is Abraham a good example of how to suffer?
2. What are the four practical steps we can take in the midst of trouble? Give a short explanation along with each word.

2. GAZE: not on your trouble, but on the beauty of your Lord; let your heart be filled with a sense of the expansive grandeur of His beauty. REMEMBER: the beauty of God is personally given to you by grace; my light, my salvation, my stronghold - it's personal. REST: rest is never found in your understanding because there will always be mystery - rest is found in your Eather who rules it all. ACT: you have been given everything you need in Christ to live in a Gospel manner even in the midst of profound trouble.

I. Abraham didn't deny reality. "He considered his own body, which was as good as dead ... [and] he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb" (Romans 4:19). He stared the reality of suffering in the face and didn't try to numb himself to the facts. Abraham didn't make the reality of suffering his mediation. He didn't continually focus on the reality of the suffering and difficulty. Instead, he focused on the character of the Lord ("fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.")

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. If Abraham is a good example of suffering well, what are some ways in which we suffer poorly?
- 2. What do we want most during times of trouble? Are we like David and seek the face of the Lord, or do we just want the suffering to end as quickly as possible?
- 3. Which of the four actions GAZE, REMEMBER, REST, and ACT do you think is most important for you practically? In other words, which word would be your biggest weakness? If time permits, consider going around the group and having each participant share.

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

1. Recall a moment of trouble or difficulty in your life where you think you suffered poorly. Using the example of Abraham and those four actions, how could you have responded differently?

NOTE: the purpose of this exercise isn't to linger on mistakes and create feelings of guilt and regret; Christ has covered all of your sin, and God is revealing this teaching to you in accordance with His perfect timing. This exercise is meant to prepare you for future personal difficulty, as well as equip you to help others who are suffering poorly in the midst of difficulty.

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

What stunning beauty have I forgotten about the Lord that was once beautiful to me? How can I rekindle my awe for that beauty?



5. Ambassadors for Christ

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 5.

1. Write down your definition of "ministry". What does ministry in the church look like? Who is called to be "ministers"? Share your definitions with the group. **NOTE:** answers will vary; don't be afraid to share your answer, even if you're not confident, and don't critique the answers of others. You don't need to have an "agreed upon" answer before the session begins.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Colossians 3:12-17

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

- 1. No believer is ever called to only be a recipient of God's grace; all of God's children are called to be participants in His plan of redemption.
- 2. We are called to be ambassadors, representing Christ and making the invisible King visible.
- 3. We have no independent ability to fulfill our calling as ambassadors because our selfishness has made us only about ourselves.
- 4. The Holy Spirit has unzipped us and invaded our lives, enabling us to live for a bigger kingdom.

NOTES:			

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

-
1. After recieving the gift of salvation, what is every believer called to be?
2. Why are we unable to fulfill our ambassadorial calling independently?
) Even though the power of sin has been broken, the presence of sin still remains. God's children are still tused to tove others more than urselves, we struggle to live for God's kingdom instead of our own, etc. It's only by the power of the Holy pirit that we can be empowered to participate in God's redemptive plan, the ministry work of the Kingdom.
) We are called to be ambassadors, or ministers of the Gospel, or participants of redemption. No believer is mply called to be a recipient. All of God's children are called to a lifestyle of ministry all the time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1. Recall your answer to the **Opening Discussion** question ("write down your definition of ministry. What does ministry in the church look like? Who is called to be "ministers"?"). How has your definition changed after this session? In other words, what did you learn about ministry?
- 2. What are some of things that you struggle with that interfere with your calling as ambassador? For example, if you're a mother, you're called to be an ambassador to your children, but your desire for relaxation will conflict with your calling. Or, if you're called to be an ambassador to your co-worker (filled to the brim with selfish words and actions), your lack of patience and grace will conflict with your calling. Don't be afraid to admit to your independent inability to fulfill your calling as ambassador; that's why the Holy Spirit has invaded our lives.

APPLYING WHAT YOU LEARNED:

1. Evaluate two relationships in your life where you are called to be an ambassador. This could be with your children, a struggling sister in Christ, an unbelieving neighbor, or anyone to whom God has called you. How can you be an ambassador? Write down specific struggles of that person and how you can make Christ visible to them. Also write down specific struggles that you face (or think you will face) in your heart in that relationship.

RELATIONSHIP 1	RELATIONSHIP 2
How can I be an ambassdor?	How can I be an ambassdor?
How will my heart struggle?	How will my heart struggle?

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Am I making my relationships all about me and what others can do to serve me? How can I serve the Lord by serving others?



6. Everyone is a Counselor

OPENING DISCUSSION:

Consider and discuss the following BEFORE watching Session 6.

1. Share some of your thoughts from the **Applying What You Learned** homework of Session 5. How can you be an ambassador to people to whom God has called you? What will you struggle with in those relationships?

Consider taking additional time, either in this setting or outside, to pray for, encourage, and challenge one another as you fulfill your ambassadorial calling. Don't let the end of this curriculum signal the end of your discussion about ministry. Remember, for the believer, ministry is life and life is ministry. Don't fall into the trap of "episodic moments of ministry."

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Colossians 3:12-17

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

- 1. God chose to have weak and flawed people as His ambassadors; weakness in ministry does not harm the Gospel, but actually proclaims the Gospel more loudly.
- 2. Your identity should never be found in ministry; it should only ever be found in Christ. Asking people to validate you in ministry destroys ministry.
- 3. The Bible is a biography of Jesus it has theological annotations, but it's the story of Christ. If you turn the Bible into wisdom principles, you actually forget to lead people to Christ. People don't need rules and principles people need a Redeemer.
- 4. Jesus didn't just die for our past sins and our future eternity He died for every struggle of the here and now. We need to teach to ourselves and to others the "nowism" of the Gospel.

NOTES:					

There are no Review Questions, Applying What You Learned, or Personal Reflection for Session 6. Instead, spend the remaining time on the Discussion Questions below, sharing what you learned in these six sessions. If time permits, ask each participant to share at least one answer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1.	. How have you grown in knowledge and understanding over these 6 sessions? In other words,
	how have you expanded your "theology" of suffering, redemption, or ministry? Write down
	some specific and concrete examples before sharing aloud:

2. Remember that the purpose of Scripture is not just informational, but transformational. What selfish and sinful tendencies have been exposed to you about you during these 6 sessions? Write down some specific and concrete answers before sharing aloud:

3. Remember that you are not only called to be a recipient of grace, but a participant of grace as well. What vision have you been given after these 6 sessions? In other words, how will you act like an ambassador in your relationships? Write down some specific and concrete answers before sharing aloud:



A NOTE TO THE LEADER

Thank you for being willing to lead this study on Women Helping Helping. The church of Jesus Christ is shockingly passive, and we have strayed so far from what God has called us to be. Even though the principles taught in this curriculum may seem radical, it was always part of the plan of redemption.

By intentionally working through this material, you will be exposed to the wisdom of Scripture and practical guidance that will help you - and the people you are leading - to remember our true calling as ambassadors for Christ.

As leader, it's your role to facilitate the study by:

- agreeing on a beginning and ending time and staying loyal to that timeframe (60 minutes suggested);
- being the one to ask the questions and encourage participation within the group;
- soliciting mutliple answers (for some questions, it might be appropriate to ask every participant to answer, but don't force anyone to answer);
- allowing "wait time" for answers (give the group time to think about a question you ask and avoid answering questions yourself; rephrase the question if necessary);
- being honest and transparent. Share from your own experiences, especially if that includes weakness, failure, and sin. The group will most likely follow your lead, and you want to encourage honesty;
- affirming everyone's answers and allowing "faulty" responses to remain uncorrected. Rejecting answers or allowing others to reject answers will result in an environment of timidity;

We strongly recommend that the leader watches all six sessions before hosting Session 1. It's helpful to have the big picture of the curriculum before watching the first session with the participants.

Finally, if you or any of the other participants are interested in furthering your understanding about what it looks like to be an ambassador for Christ, you should consider Paul Tripp's book, **Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change.** This material provides a deep and practical study on what personal ministry looks like within the body of Christ.

A training kit is also available on our website and includes a 12-session DVD and corresponding guides for the Leader and Participant. To learn how to become an effective tool of change in the lives of others, visit www.paultripp.com/instruments.



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