

INKED

some things don't change

PROTECTION • WEEK 5 • DEC. 17/18, 2011 (JASON STRAND)

INTRODUCTION

THIS WEEK'S PROMISE: Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God. —Isaiah 43:1-4

Faced with multiple circumstances in this life, sometimes we can feel like we're being completely overtaken. We tend to wonder where God is when we're gripped by some of our darkest moments. In the fifth week of the series, *Inked*, we continue to focus on some of the most powerful promises that God makes to us in the Bible. Anchored to this week's promise, let the scriptures and the questions below inform you that Emmanuel—God with us—will bring you through difficult times.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When God says to you, "You are mine," what reaction does that evoke in you? How does the way your parents treated you as their son or daughter influence how you believe God views you?
2. What has you feeling either fearful or overwhelmed these days? How would taking your eyes and thoughts off the problem itself and putting them on to God shift how you approach the situation? How would it affect your outlook or behavior?
3. Read **John 16:33** along with **Isaiah 43:1-4** again. To trust in God doesn't mean that you won't face problems. In fact, he guarantees you'll have them in this world. How does this influence your view of him as Protector? What have been your expectations of what God is like?
4. Read **Psalms 84:5-7** and **Psalms 46:1**. Most of the time, we want to avoid problems, yet in spite of problems, God gives us the hope to go through them and get to the other side. What have you had to journey through that made you stronger in some way because God was with you?
5. Receiving and relying on God's love for us is key to trusting him, but we can be afraid to release to him things that we want to control. Francis Chan in his book *Crazy Love* says it this way, "We try to set up our lives so that everything will be fine even if God doesn't come through. But true faith means holding nothing back. It means putting every hope in God's fidelity to his promises." What have you been relying on yourself for, and wish to ask God for his help now instead?

THINK ABOUT IT

Jason said, "Insecurity is such an epidemic in our day. But your value isn't based on who you are. It's based on who you belong to. When you find your identity in Christ and the fact that you belong to him, you can get through anything." Put this week's promise somewhere that you can view it. Reflect on the fact that you are God's and he is yours, and wherever you are, whatever you're facing, he is with you.

MEMORIZE

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