

# LifeGroup

## Leader Guide



### A FRESH START WITH GOD

**BIG IDEA:** Embrace the new things God is doing in our lives and trust Him for renewal.

**DATE:** August 10, 2025

**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 43:15-21

*Today's lesson is a little shorter to give you time to fellowship around breakfast.*

### OPENING QUESTION

**Growing up, when did you typically go back to school – before or after Labor Day? Were you excited about the new school year or were you the kid who went kicking and screaming?**

*Whether it's a new school year, a fresh new calendar page, or a fresh start in a new career or relationship – we all long for something new. When have you experienced a fresh start in your life? What did it mean to you?*

*Today we are going to look at what it means to have a fresh start with God and how to do that.*

### THE SETTING

Isaiah is a book of the Bible written more than 2700 years ago by a man who obeyed God's call to be His prophet, God's mouthpiece to His people. Isaiah spoke to his original audience regarding current events, but also prophesied happenings that have since been fulfilled, like the birth of the Messiah, and some that have yet to come to fruition as they speak of the future return of Christ. Isaiah will help us discover that God extends His hand toward us. He doesn't crush us when we are weak; rather, He renews our strength and walks with us through the trials and difficulties we will face. Through His mercy we can get a fresh start.

### STUDY THE BIBLE: ISAIAH 43:15-21

I am the LORD, your Holy One,  
Israel's Creator, your King."

<sup>16</sup>This is what the LORD says—  
he who made a way through the sea,  
a path through the mighty waters,  
<sup>17</sup>who drew out the chariots and horses,  
the army and reinforcements together,  
and they lay there, never to rise again,  
extinguished, snuffed out like a wick:

<sup>18</sup>"Forget the former things;  
do not dwell on the past.

<sup>19</sup>See, I am doing a new thing!

Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
I am making a way in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland.  
<sup>20</sup> The wild animals honor me,  
the jackals and the owls,  
because I provide water in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland,  
to give drink to my people, my chosen,  
<sup>21</sup> the people I formed for myself  
that they may proclaim my praise.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### READ ISAIAH 43:15-21

Here are three things we can apply to our lives from these verses:

#### Let Go of the Past

Isaiah 43:18 reminds us to *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past."* God wants us to move forward, not be held back by past failures or regrets.

- What character qualities and displays of power in the past did God bring to their attention? (vv. 15-17)
- What did the Lord tell him to do with the memories of the past, and why? (vv. 18-19)
- Why do you think God reminded them of the past and then told them to forget it?
- How does God provide fresh starts in our lives? What would a "fresh start" look like in your life right now?

#### Recognize God's Work

Sometimes, we don't see the new things God is doing because we're focused on old struggles. These verses remind us to open our eyes to His plans.

- Where is God at work in your life?
- What lessons can we take from past experiences into this new season?
- How can we trust God even when we don't see immediate change?

#### Trust God for the Impossible

Just as He promises to make *"a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland,"* God can bring hope and provision in the most unexpected places.

- As a new season approaches where are you trusting God to bring hope and provision?
- What are some practical ways to renew or rededicate our faith journey?

## RESPONSE

Where are you in need of a fresh start in your life? Isaiah 43:25 reminds us God "blots out your transgressions" and "remembers your sin no more." Let go of the past, recognize where God is at work and trust God for the impossible!

## COMMENTARY

The prophet turned to the courtroom scene again to demonstrate the greatness of the Lord. The Lord's people are called as witnesses to the fact that there is no other like the Lord.

Isaiah 43: 14-28 is all about God's mercy despite Israel's unfaithfulness.

These verses show us the priority of grace. The Lord didn't rescue His people because they were well behaved. He comforted them because He is a faithful and forgiving God. That is good news for you and me because we also need rescue from our sin and struggles. A New Testament example of this same grace appears in Romans:

*"But God showed his great love for us  
by sending Christ to die for us  
while we were still sinners."  
Romans 5:8*

The Lord also instructed his people to forget the past because He was doing a new thing. One commentator pointed out that God's fundamental principles don't change but his methods flex with changing needs: "We are meant to reflect on the past with gratitude and stimulated faith but not to stereotype our expectations from God" (Gaebelien). I say his language was reminiscent of the exodus when Moses led the people out of captivity. Last time God delivered through the waters of the Red Sea, and this time He would make a way through the desert. Our God wants us to do new things in our lives too! His principles don't change - His Word never fades, but His present deliverance might take a different shape than His rescue in the past. We can't expect the Lord to work according to a past formula because He is a God who does new things.

The Lord helps us through our difficulties with His love and presence, but He also calls us to share His comfort with others. The Israelites didn't ask for God's help, and they grew tired of Him. God called them to repent, but He didn't abandon them. Instead, He told them to forget the past and get ready for new things ahead. No matter what the past week, month, or year has held for us, we can start afresh today by receiving God's comfort and helping others do the same. Whether you are coming out of a trial, in the midst of the fire, or headed into the flames, hold on to the truth that the Lord loves you and is nearer than you think.

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