

Why? | Why Do You Let Bad Things Happen? • Week Two • January 21, 2018

Job 10: 1-3; Mark 14:32-36

Opening: What are some of the bad things that have touched your life? In what ways do you think God's character changes based on your good or bad life events?

Discussion:

Causes of Suffering:

Pastor Dan Meyer stated, "Suffering is caused by the outworking of physical law, the violation of moral law, and the breaking of spiritual law -- and all of those laws are, fundamentally, gracious gifts of a good God." He concluded, "The lousy events of life don't in any way demonstrate a lack of love or power on the part of God."

- What conclusion do you draw regarding God's character based on the consequences of these fundamental laws?
- How much suffering would disappear, if we learned to love one another?

Benefits of Suffering:

Dan suggested, "We can make better sense of the pain we encounter by trying to see the positive effects that such suffering can potentially have."

Suffering CAN serve as the holy hammer that shatters our self-centeredness.

- Thinking honestly, who is at the center of your universe? Do you see this as good, bad, ugly, sinful or normal?
- How are you seeking the One who truly is the center of the universe?

Suffering CAN be the path to a greater intimacy with God and others.

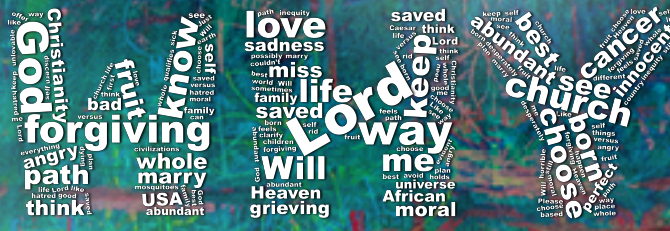
- Why do you think this is so? What propels intimacy with God for you?
- Have you experienced this greater intimacy with God amidst suffering? Would you share this with the group?

Suffering CAN also be the wake-up call we need to take sin and evil seriously.

- How seriously do you take the sin in your life? What do you need to believe or receive from God to address your sin tendencies?
- How well do you understand the power of evil and spiritual warfare? How could you learn more?
- In what ways are you letting evil persist by doing nothing?

When enduring suffering, what is your attitude or posture? How could seasons of suffering become means of grace in disguise?

Pastor Dan challenged us to think through how we go on, when enduring suffering.



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The Christian Response to Suffering:

Pastor Dan first stated, "Know that God suffers with us." (Isaiah 53:3; Luke 19:41)

- How does this bring comfort?

Secondly, we were dared us to ask companions to come alongside us in our suffering.

- Why is it hard to express such vulnerability? What gets in our way?
- How do you express care and comfort to those that are enduring suffering?
- What holds you back from coming alongside others in their suffering?

The third response, "Cry out to God. Be authentic. Express emotion. Raise your questions." (Mark 14:36)

- How has God responded to your cries? How has He shown up for you?

Fourthly, Pastor Dan stated, "Even if offered through clenched teeth, we need to learn to believe in the ultimate redemptive purpose of God." (Job 42:2)

- What emotions have you felt as you've attempted to truly utter the words 'thy will be done' in prayer? What does this place of surrender say about us?
- What might the redemptive purposes of God look like?

In conclusion, George MacDonald said, "I know that good is coming to me—that good is always coming..."

- How would clinging to this truth move you forward?

Practice of the Week:

Compassion: to become the healing presence of Christ to others

- Find an opportunity and means to comfort, encourage and support those who struggle, suffer or are oppressed.
- Read or listen to the news as a call to prayer and compassion
- Attend to the needs of the sick, hurting, disabled or burdened with patient love

Additional Resources:

The Problem of Pain by C.S. Lewis

Walking with God through Pain and Suffering by Timothy Keller

We'd love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts, questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We would also LOVE to hear how God is using these Scriptures and study guides in your lives.

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