



Family Conversation Guide

(September 05, 2021)

In this week's passage from the Book of John, Jesus gives us some practical ways to handle pain and tribulation.

READ AND DISCUSS

Ask family members to find [John 12:27-43](#) in their Bibles. Give them pens and paper so that they can take notes as they listen to the sermon.

Before beginning, ask: **"If you could have an hour with Jesus to talk about hard things (tribulations) in your life, what would you ask him?"** (Read [John 16:33](#))
Does everyone suffer at some time in their lives? Discuss how different family members feel they have been hurt, sad or discouraged. Here are some practical ways to deal with pain.

1. **It's okay to admit It.** Say it if you are going through a tough time. In [John 12:27](#) Jesus admits that His soul is troubled. **Is it important to talk with God and other people about your hurting heart?** (*Admitting the feeling is the beginning of healing!*)
2. **It is okay to question why you are suffering.** Jesus did it, and we can too. Jesus knew He was going to be suffering very soon, and He was very worried about it, just as we would be. It's okay to ask God to help you understand. Ask Him to show you.
3. **There is purpose in the pain.** In [verses 27-28](#), Jesus asked God to take the suffering away from Him. **Did He have to go through this?** But He knew this was God's plan and purpose. He came to save us and by dying on the cross He

would fulfill this purpose, and He would glorify God. **Have you ever seen something good come out of a bad situation?**

4. **Glorify God in the pain. What does it mean to glorify?** (*To render a good opinion of someone, that others would think well of them. When our lives are a mirror of Jesus, we glorify Him.*) This is true especially when we are suffering, knowing God is in control and He is with us. **Are we showing people our trust in God and our love for Him, or anger and bitterness in our suffering?** We can influence others for Jesus in our suffering.
5. **Listen for God's voice.** Read **verses 29-30**. A voice came to Jesus and the crowd heard it. Some thought it was thunder, others thought an angel was speaking. **Do you listen for God's voice?** Jesus said that His sheep know His voice. **How can we hear God's voice?** When we are going through great pain, we are most open to God's voice (Draw near to hear). Jesus said the voice came for our sake, not for Jesus' sake. But not everyone could hear it. **Why?**
6. **Don't blame God for the devil's work.** (Read **verse 31**) **When something bad happens to us, do we believe that God did this to us?** Only good things come from God. If we suffer, it is because of Satan's work in the world, not God. In Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve chose to listen to Satan and break their relationship with God, they gave Satan authority in the world. Now, through His sacrifice, Jesus would defeat the power of Satan. He would no longer have authority over those who follow Jesus.
7. **Keep looking at the cross.** In **verse 32**, Jesus says that when He is lifted up, He will draw all to Him. He can give us healing in our spirits as we look to Him. We need to realize that by dying on the cross, Jesus entered into our human suffering with us. He understands and He is with us. He gives us ultimate healing by the gift of eternal life.
8. **Just look at the next step.** (Read **verses 33-36**) Jesus will help us in the dark times. We must trust that Jesus is the light of the world, and He will show His

sons and daughters of the light the next steps they need to take. As we take the next step, He will lead us.

9. **God is with you, no matter what.** (Read **verses 36-38**) After this, Jesus went away and hid Himself. In these dark times in our lives, it sometimes feels that God has hidden Himself. He wants us to trust in Jesus and know that though it may seem He isn't there, He is always with us. **Read the words of the prophet Isaiah that were fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"**

On that day, many still refused to believe in Jesus, even though He had done so many things to show them His glory. But **those who did believe would be His sons and daughters forever**, and He will take them (and us) by the hand and guide us in our pain, from our darkness, into the light.

10. **Pain will show us the condition of our hearts.** In **verses 39, 40** the Israelites continued to reject God and He had hardened their hearts. If we continue to choose bitterness and anger, our hearts will become hardened to God. **Are you close to God with a soft heart, or is your heart hardened against God? Are you turning to Him or away from Him?** (*The same sun that melts ice is also the same sun that will harden clay*) **Is your heart tender toward God?**
11. **Pain allows us to see who our true friends are.** In **verses 42-44** many believed in Jesus but would not speak about Him, out of fear that they would be cast out of the synagogue. Even today, many people who say they believe in Jesus will not stand up for Him because they do not want others to judge them. **Are you afraid to speak out for Jesus? Are you worried about what others will think about you? And, when we are going through a hard time, who will be there for us?** Those who love Jesus will comfort you and will be with you during your times of pain. They will not leave you alone to suffer.
12. **Know that Jesus is King.** In **Isaiah 6:1**, Isaiah had a glimpse of God's glory. He was lifted up from earth into heaven. He saw Jesus, the King and glorious ruler

of everything. We can trust Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, with every part of our life. **Do you trust Jesus with every part of your life, or is there something you are holding back from Him?** Only Jesus can bring the peace we need in every area of our lives.

FAMILY CHALLENGE

Challenge your family to take these twelve steps whenever they are faced with tribulation, pain, or suffering. Even though bad things may happen to us sometimes, how can we glorify Jesus and show others we trust Him? As family members experience challenges, work together to talk about it with God and each other, admit we are hurting, listen for God's voice, and trust Him to give us the next steps to take. Pray together whenever a family member is hurting, and reach out to others that you know are suffering.

FOR YOUNGER KIDS

Ask: "Have you ever been sad or hurt? How can knowing Jesus help you? Having a heart that is soft toward Jesus is so important. He wants us to turn to Him."

Take some play doh, and ask your child to make two hearts with it. Set one of the hearts out in the sun. Leave it for a day and then look at it together. What happened to the heart? (*It became hardened and cracked*)

Put the other play doh heart in a zip loc. Write the word "Jesus" on the zip loc. After a day, look at the heart in the zip loc. **Was it hard like the other heart?**

Say: "Like these play doh hearts, our hearts can be soft toward God, or they can be hardened toward God. When we are going through a hard time, it's important to stay close to Jesus. He will walk beside us, and He will be there for us and guide us through hard times. If we turn away from God, being angry and disappointed when we are hurting, our hearts can be hardened toward Him, even though we need Him to give us peace and to guide us. It's important to pray and to ask God to help us."

PRAYER

“Dear Jesus, please help us to know that You are there for us no matter what is going on in our lives, and that we can talk with You. When we are suffering we can know that You understand because You have suffered, too. We know You love us and You will walk beside us and help us. Thank You, Jesus. Amen.”