

WHERE IS GOD?

REAL-LIFE STORIES OF HOPE IN SUFFERING
STUDY GUIDE

MOVINGWORKS®

INTRODUCTION

Where is God when you're hurting? Why does it feel like He doesn't hear your prayers? Can He be trusted? As followers of Jesus, we all experience seasons of loss, grief, and doubt on this side of eternity. Watch four real-life stories of people asking the hard questions in their suffering and experiencing God's love, peace, and comfort in the midst of the storm.

SESSION 1: Experiencing God's Peace in Trials

Watch Session 1 and spend some time reflecting on the film.

1. Life doesn't always turn out the way we expected. Actually, more often than we'd like, it brings unexpected sorrow and hardship. Is there a situation in your life that has turned out drastically different than what you expected? Explain.
2. Do you struggle with anxiety as a result? What are you worried about right now?
3. Read Philippians 4:4-7.
4. What is your honest response to the command in verse 4 to "rejoice in the Lord always"?
5. Like Lore, we often pray for circumstantial change, but the promise God gives us instead in verse 7 is "the peace of God, which surpasses understanding". Why is that much better?
6. How does Jesus' finished work on the cross give us peace in difficult times?
7. Considering the questions above, what would it look like for you to rejoice in the Lord during your trials?
8. Spend time in prayer presenting your requests to God and thanking Him for the promise of giving peace in the midst of the storms.

SESSION 2: Remembering God's Promises in Grief

Watch Session 2 and spend some time reflecting on the film.

1. Sometimes the greatest moments in life can drastically turn into the most painful moments, and all you are left with is grief. Have you ever experienced a season of grief? How so?
2. Just like the Ramoses, we can cry out to God honestly with our doubts, frustration, and anger when we don't understand His ways. What might hinder you from being honest with God?
3. Read Psalm 22:1-10.
4. In Psalm 22, David recounts God's power and faithfulness despite his suffering. Do you find it difficult to do this? Why or why not?
5. David's prophetic words in verse 1 were repeated by Jesus on the cross. What does this reveal about Jesus' ability to relate to our grief?
6. How does Jesus' faithfulness, even in his suffering, bring you hope and joy?
7. When we go through suffering, it gives us an opportunity to testify to God's faithfulness with others around us. How might a season of suffering be used to encourage others around you?
8. Spend time in prayer crying out to God about your grief and remembering His faithfulness towards you.

SESSION 3: Trusting God's Goodness in Uncertainty

Watch Session 3 and spend some time reflecting on the film.

1. We can experience suffering when we are waiting or longing for something to happen in our lives. What plans or dreams are you presently waiting for God to fulfill?
2. In the waiting, do you resonate with Annie's doubts about God's goodness? How so?
3. Read Lamentations 3:17-25.
4. In what ways have you experienced similar emotions to the author of this passage in Lamentations?
5. What is your honest response to the truth that, even in affliction, the Lord is good to those who wait for Him?
6. What does this passage say about God's character?
7. Annie realized that her true portion and fulfillment came from the Lord, not from having kids. What would it look like to trust God, not based on an outcome but based on His character?
8. Spend time in prayer being honest with God about your longings and recalling His goodness shown towards you in the waiting.

SESSION 4: Receiving God's Comfort in Pain

Watch Session 4 and spend some time reflecting on the film.

1. Suffering can even come into our lives through the sins of other people. Think of a time you experienced suffering because of someone else. How did this affect you?
2. Did your view of God change in response to your affliction? If so, how?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7.
4. Paul describes God as the "Father of mercies and God of all comfort". Does this feel hard to believe? Why or why not?
5. What promises do you see about comfort in this passage?
6. How has God brought you through suffering with a comfort that only He can offer?
7. In verse 6, Paul writes, "If we (Paul and Timothy) are afflicted, it is for your (the Corinthians) comfort and salvation". How can one person's sufferings be for another person's comfort? Consider Jesus' work on the cross.
8. Considering the comfort Christ has given you, how might you use your own suffering to comfort others? Be specific.
9. Spend time in prayer sharing your afflictions with God and praising Him for the great mercy and comfort He gives to you in Christ.

CONCLUSION

Let these stories and more importantly, God's Word, remind you of His peace, His promises, His goodness, and His comfort as you patiently endure hardship in this lifetime. We can be confident in this truth revealed in Romans 8:18, that suffering will one day come to an end, and God's glory will outshine every difficulty, trial, and loss. "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us."