

Subject: Finding Comfort in Suffering, the Book of Job, Introduction – Part 2

Dear Beloved Church Family,

As we begin our journey through the Book of Job, I wanted to reach out with a recap of this week's second introduction to help us prepare our hearts and minds for what lies ahead. This teaching along with great individual and family discipleship resources (blue button under the teaching) are now available at [[TEACHING](#)].

**Summary:** The sermon explored why God placed two introductions to Job on my heart—because the question of pain and suffering represents perhaps the greatest challenge to both skeptics and believers in their relationship with God. We examined how Christianity uniquely addresses suffering, not just philosophically, but through the person of Jesus Christ who enters into our pain with us. Unlike other worldviews that leave us crushed under moral law, trapped by unanswerable questions, or relying solely on human strength, Christianity offers God Himself as the solution to understanding and overcoming suffering. The scarlet thread running through Job isn't suffering itself—it's Jesus, our hope and victory in the midst of every trial.

**Takeaways:**

1. Suffering, while painful, serves purposes we often cannot see in the moment. Many of life's most important lessons, greatest accomplishments, and deepest character formation come through difficulty rather than comfort. We should be careful not to make an idol of comfort and miss the riches that can come through suffering.
2. Isolation is suffering's greatest cruelty. What we desperately need in our pain is comfort, care, love, and safety—and these only come through relationships with God and one another. Job's abandonment by his friends was one of his greatest tragedies. Let us commit to being present with those who suffer.
3. Only Christianity offers a God who enters into our suffering with us. Our pain is a symptom of separation from God, which means healing comes through restoration with Him. At Calvary, Jesus provides the freedom and grace we need to be overcomers, both in this life and in the promised future where there will be no more pain.

As we prepare for the coming weeks, I encourage you to reflect on this question: Is your focus on the cause of your or others suffering, or on God's purposes through it? The answer may transform your walk with God and your ministry to others.

In Christ's love, Pastor Jim

## Finding Comfort in Suffering - Introduction Part 2

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# The Book of Job

### I. Introduction: Questions and Themes

“The little one does not have to be taught to cry. Laughter comes with the familiarity of love. Pain comes from unfamiliarity, estrangement, puzzlement, aloneness, and physical and emotional isolation. The baby leers to smile in response to being cradled, comforted, held, protected, and loved.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Well, our study of Job has a first...in that I am doing two introductions to the book. **The reason is that the question of pain and suffering, in all of its forms, is perhaps the greatest challenge one has in their belief in God** – something I think is true of both skeptic and believer.
2. “Why God?” **If you are good and all powerful, why do you allow suffering?** Your eternal promise is that your children will one day not have any suffering, so why must we go through it now? **Why did my baby die?** Why did you allow that cruelty to take place? **And the list goes on.**
3. As I was contemplating this the reality that a study of Job needs a clear balance between the theological truth and the reality of our lived experiences. **This is true because in the midst of great hurt and pain, we don't care about theology.** It's also true because victory is found in Jesus, who is Truth...**so we must remain anchored to God's word for us to have victory in and through our sufferings.**
4. While we are tempted to focus on suffering, the scarlet thread through the entire book of Job is Jesus. **That is human pain and suffering is the mode of revealing that our hope lies solely in the person of Jesus.** What's more, some of the more profound

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<sup>1</sup> Why suffering? Finding meaning and Comfort When Life Doesn't Make Sense, Zacharias, Vitale, p57, Kindle Edition

weaknesses and outright failures of any other religion/worldview generally fail to deal with both God's existence (or not) AND if He does exist, what about His character and His purposes with respect to evil and suffering.

5. Adapted from a book written by Vince Vitale and Ravi Zacharias on suffering, we see that pantheists, Muslims, Buddhists, and almost all other religions posit suffering as payment of good versus bad in your life. [Their religions might be described as the means of paying for your wrongdoing.](#) Further, while for different reasons, all end up with the individual being subsumed into the greater, meaning the individual has no personal value nor purpose.

For nontheist and atheist, God is NOT in the house, [so all suffering is seen and dealt within the limitations of man power, wisdom, and desires of what it defines as the good life](#) – meaning there is no hope beyond ourselves; this man-as-God is a truly frightening thought.

The authors say it this way...”For the Buddhist, suffering is the admission ticket to higher level of pleasure for which there is no need for grace and forgiveness as they seek – in their power – the ultimate state of pleasure in material terms with martyrdom (defined as the end of you – all of you) the supreme triumph over pain”. [What’s more, ”The pantheist is crushed by the moral law of cause and effect.](#) The Muslim’s only purpose in life is to fulfill that law as the cause for his or her effect. [The skeptic cannot fully appreciate any music of life because the struggle for a moral law finds no definition.](#) Hence, there is no moral cause or effect. [She cannot escape the implications of her worldview and is trapped by her own questions.”](#)

To which I respond, only in Christianity is God the solution, both in (1) understanding and (2) overcoming suffering...while being far better for it. [Only in Jesus can we find both coherent transcendent purpose and extravagant, value-laden love.](#)

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6. As we travel through the book of Job, we will certainly look to see how God answers the question of why there is suffering. Yet, at least as important, and maybe more so, is the question of how we navigate the pain in allowing our sufferings to bring forth Godly character.

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7. For the rest of our time together today, I want to highlight some thoughts and questions. We may try to explore some a bit more in detail, but our goal for today is preparing us for our study of Job.

## II. Questions & Ruminations:

1. If not God, to where will you turn in your time of suffering? Has anything else ever brought you through the suffering to victory?
2. Feelings often trump logic and evidence. Said differently, philosophies and ideas cannot bring enduring comfort, contentment, and hope. This can only be done by a living God that one's life is built in having peace with the Lord.
3. Does not our temporary suffering give insight to eternal suffering AND therein, cause us to rightly fear the Lord?
4. *How much of your suffering(s) had anything whatsoever to do with the kingdom of God? (what about your joys?)*
5. Could it be that some of our suffering is because we are not on God's page? Perhaps God is using our suffering as the refiners fire with some very specific goals in mind in growing you in holiness (Ja 1:2-4; 1 Pet 1:6-7; Ro 5:1-5; Phil 3:7-9)
6. For a moment please try to lay down your supposition that suffering is the enemy that must be avoided at all cost. Frankly, my hope is that you will begin to see the riches that come with suffering and reject the false god of comfortability, meaning being without suffering. Without suffering, how do we know and/or what is the point of:
  - A. Purpose;

- B. Freedom;
- C. Justice;
- D. Love;
- E. Forgiveness;
- F. Hope;
- G. Value/Identity;
- H. Righteousness/Unrighteousness;
- I. The church;
- J. Worship;
- K. Goodness;
- L. Worthiness;
- M. Trustworthiness;
- N. Integrity;
- O. Faithfulness;
- P. Accountability;
- Q. So many of God's promises involving suffering; and this list goes on.

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7. As we consider Job, is not one of the greatest tragedies him being abandoned by his friends? *In the midst of the suffering, what we crave is comfort, care, love, safety, and the like.* Yet, these things only come through relationships – with God and one another. *One author noted that “sufferings greatest cruelty is its isolation, isolation that robs us of hope.”*
8. Take a moment to consider important life lessons. *Were they because things were so good or did suffering played a role?* Are not some of your greatest accomplishments a response to the suffering of this life? *Is there a more powerful tool at God's disposal for shaping and molding us, than suffering?*
9. Rhetorical: What sense does it make to use our God-given freedom to free us from the very One that gives us life, meaning, purpose, and love...all in His design to exclusion of suffering?

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10. Absolute suffering is the absence of God. *This is truly hell.* A place where there is no love, for God is love. *A place offering emptiness and meaningless without hope.*

11. Free will led to sin, the bondage to sin led to suffering, and our pain is the symptom of our separation from God. This directly suggests that healing can only come with restoration with God and this, in turn, points to freedom found at Calvary in the person of Jesus.

12. There is one God that enters into our suffering with us...that we may be overcomers by the power of His grace. Much of this overcoming is on this side of heaven, but there will come a day when there is no more pain and no more suffering.

13. Is it possible for us to see our pain and suffering for some future benefit?

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14. Is our focus to be on the cause of suffering or the “work” of suffering?

15. Is pain inherently bad? Is it good to know what hot is? Is it good to have been shocked a little so we know better than to put ourselves in a position of being shocked a lot?

16. Can one love without the freedom to choose love and risk suffering in rejection?

17. Why does history suggest that the Christian is strengthened in the fiery furnace of suffering while also suggesting the life free of suffering is weakened?

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18. How do we overcome evil? By inviting God into our suffering.

19. While God is not the author of our suffering, is it possible it is one of the primary instruments He uses to draw us closer to Himself and to make us more like Him? If so, should we wish suffering away?

### III. Closing:

1. In the end, our study of Job carries with it two BIG questions. **Why suffering?** And with that, what is the “work” of our suffering, including how we navigate the pain?
2. I hope this has peaked your curiosity about the book of Job and placed a hunger in your heart to hear God’s word with respect to our all-to-real suffering.
3. We have a special first peak for you tonight...those that sign up first, get the most...

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## **Finding Comfort in Suffering: Introduction to the book of Job - Part 2 Discussion Prompts**

Don't be shy or embarrassed, this is a safe place to talk, learn, and grow. All of us should walk with an attitude of grace and Godly love in encouraging one another to contribute to our shared growth in the Lord.

***For more discussion questions helping your faith to grow, please download the sermon documents typically posted the day after each sermon on the watch tab of our App or website.***

1. Share how you do or would respond to someone that objects to the Christian faith based on a god that allows suffering.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Discuss approaches to minister to family, friends, and acquaintances in the midst of suffering. Does it matter if they are following Jesus? If yes, how does it change your response.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Did disobeying God bring Adam and Eve more freedom or less? Did disobeying God bring Adam and Eve more suffering or less? How can the answer to these guide our counsel of others...especially in a culture that defines freedom as doing "what I want when I want" (note this is a lie and its impossible because we all have real constraints, but the thought still persists)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Bonus Prompt: Working together, write a list or word picture describing the purposes of suffering.

## **Finding Comfort in Suffering: An Introduction to the book of Job – Pt 2**

*This will be an unusual introduction as it is more about challenging our thoughts and biases that we may receive the vast riches of what God is sharing in Job about this very difficult topic.*

### **I. Introduction: Themes & Questions**

### **II. Ruminations Through Questions**

## **5-Day Devotional**

### **Finding Comfort in Suffering**

#### **Introduction to Job – Part 2**

#### **Day 1: The Question of Pain**

**Reading: Job 1:1-22**

**Devotional:** Job's story begins with unimaginable loss, yet his response reveals profound faith: "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." When suffering crashes into our lives, we face a choice—will we turn toward God or away from Him? The question isn't whether pain will come, but where we'll turn when it does. Philosophy offers cold comfort; human strength eventually fails. Only a living relationship with God sustains us through the valley.

Today, acknowledge that feelings of abandonment don't change God's presence. He enters our suffering with us, not as a distant observer but as Emmanuel—God with us. Your pain matters to Him. What suffering are you facing today? Have you invited God into it, or are you trying to manage it alone?

#### **Day 2: The Isolation of Suffering**

**Reading: Job 2:11-13; Romans 12:15**

**Devotional:** Job's friends initially did something beautiful—they sat with him in silence for seven days. Suffering's greatest cruelty is isolation, the feeling that no one understands or cares. Yet God designed us for community precisely for these moments. We learn compassion, love, and faithfulness not in comfort but in the furnace of affliction—both our own and others'.

The church exists partly to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the hurting. When we weep with those who weep, we reflect God's heart. Conversely, when we suffer, we need the body of Christ surrounding us. Don't withdraw in your pain; reach out. Let others carry you to Jesus. Who in your life is suffering in isolation? How can you sit with them today, offering presence over answers?

#### **Day 3: Suffering's Purpose**

**Reading: Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4**

**Devotional:** What if suffering isn't merely something to endure but something God uses to transform us? Scripture repeatedly points to this paradox: tribulation produces perseverance, perseverance produces character, and character produces hope. Without struggle, how would we develop strength? Without darkness, how would we recognize light? God isn't the author of evil, but He is the master craftsman who redeems it for our good and His glory. The question shifts from "Why is this happening?" to "What is God doing through this?"

Like gold refined in fire, our faith emerges purer, stronger, more beautiful. The fiery furnace doesn't destroy us; it reveals what we're truly made of and shapes us into Christ's image. What character qualities has God developed in you through past suffering? How might your current trials be shaping you?

**Day 4: The God Who Enters In**

**Reading: Isaiah 53:3-5; Hebrews 4:14-16**

**Devotional:** Christianity stands alone among worldviews because our God doesn't remain distant from suffering—He entered it. Jesus became "a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief." He experienced betrayal, physical torture, abandonment, and death. Because of this, we have a High Priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses. Other religions offer karma, self-improvement, or stoic acceptance. Jesus offers Himself. He doesn't merely explain suffering; He bears it with us and for us. At Calvary, God absorbed the ultimate suffering—separation from Himself—so we would never face absolute isolation.

When you cry out in pain, you cry to One who understands intimately. Approach His throne of grace with confidence, knowing you're heard and loved. How does knowing Jesus suffered change your perspective on your own pain? Can you see Him walking through it with you?

**Day 5: Hope Beyond Suffering**

**Reading: Job 19:25-27; Revelation 21:1-5**

**Devotional:** In his darkest moment, Job declared, "I know that my Redeemer lives!" This is our anchor: suffering is not the end of the story. God promises a day when He will wipe every tear from our eyes, when death, mourning, crying, and pain will be no more. Our present sufferings are producing an eternal weight of glory beyond comparison. This hope doesn't minimize current pain; it contextualizes it. We're not trapped in endless cycles of karma or meaningless existence.

We're being prepared for an inheritance that cannot fade. Until that day, we walk by faith, trusting that the God who conquered death through resurrection will bring beauty from ashes, joy from mourning, victory from our valleys. Hold fast—your Redeemer lives! How does the promise of eternity without suffering give you strength today? What would change if you truly believed your pain has purpose and an end?

## **Small Group Study Guide**

### **Finding Comfort in Suffering**

#### **Introduction to Job – Part 2**

**Opening Prayer:** Begin by inviting God into your time together, asking Him to give wisdom and openness as you discuss difficult topics of pain, suffering, and His purposes.

**Key Takeaways:** Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. The question of suffering is perhaps the greatest challenge to belief in God for both skeptics and believers alike.
2. Only Christianity offers God as the solution to both understanding and overcoming suffering—not just explaining it, but walking through it with us.
3. Suffering is not the ultimate enemy—avoiding it at all costs may actually rob us of growth, purpose, and deeper relationship with God.
4. The scarlet thread through Job is Jesus—our hope in suffering lies solely in the person of Christ.
5. Isolation is suffering's greatest cruelty—we need God and community to navigate pain with hope.

**Discussion Questions:** Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. The sermon contrasts Christianity with other worldviews on suffering. What stood out to you about how different religions or philosophies approach pain?
2. How does the statement "only in Jesus can we find both coherent transcendent purpose and extravagant, value-laden love" resonate with you or challenge you?
3. The pastor asks: "If not God, to where will you turn in your time of suffering?" Be honest—where have you turned (or been tempted to turn) during difficult seasons?
4. Consider the extensive list in the sermon (purpose, freedom, justice, love, forgiveness, hope, etc.). Which of these would be impossible to truly understand without suffering? Why?

5. Have you experienced suffering that, looking back, shaped you in ways comfort never could? Share if you're comfortable.
6. The sermon suggests we should shift our focus from "the cause of suffering" to "the purposes of suffering." How might this change in perspective affect how you view current or past difficulties?
7. React to this statement: "Free will led to sin, the bondage to sin led to suffering, and our pain is the symptom of our separation from God." Does this help you understand suffering better? Why or why not?
8. How does the idea that "absolute suffering is the absence of God" (hell) help us understand that God's presence in our suffering is actually a gift?
9. The sermon notes that Job's abandonment by his friends was one of his greatest tragedies. How can we, as a small group, be better friends to those who are suffering?
10. What are practical ways we can "invite God into our suffering" rather than trying to escape it or handle it on our own?

**Practical Applications:** Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. **Reframe Your Perspective:** Identify one current difficulty in your life, journal and pray about what God might be teaching you through it. Ask God to help you see His purposes not just the pain.
2. **Enter Someone's Suffering:** Reach out to someone you know who is going through a hard time. Don't try to fix it or explain it—just be present. Listen, pray with them, and offer practical help
3. **Study Suffering in Scripture:** Read one of these passages daily and journal what it teaches about suffering: Romans 5:3-5, 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 4:12-19, Hebrews 12:7-11.

**Closing Prayer Points:**

- Pray for those in the group currently experiencing suffering
- Ask God to help the group see suffering through His eyes
- Thank God that He doesn't leave us alone in our pain
- Pray for hearts that are open to what God will teach through the study of Job

## **Discussion Questions**

### **Finding Comfort in Suffering**

#### **Introduction to Job – Part 2**

1. How does the Christian understanding of suffering differ fundamentally from other worldviews like Buddhism, Islam, or atheism, and why does this distinction matter in your daily life?
2. The sermon suggests that suffering is one of God's primary instruments to draw us closer to Himself. Can you identify a time when pain or difficulty deepened your relationship with God?
3. If we were to eliminate all suffering from our lives, what essential virtues and experiences would we lose, and how would that diminish our humanity?
4. The author states that 'suffering's greatest cruelty is its isolation.' How can the church better enter into the suffering of others to provide comfort, care, and hope?
5. How do our feelings about suffering often override the logical and theological truths we know about God's character and purposes?
6. In what ways have you been tempted to turn to something or someone other than God in times of suffering, and what was the result compared to turning to Him?
7. The sermon asks whether we should focus on the cause of suffering or the purposes of suffering. How does shifting this focus change the way you process pain?
8. How can we develop the spiritual maturity to see our present pain and suffering as potentially serving some future benefit in God's redemptive plan?
9. Why do you think Christians throughout history have often been strengthened through persecution and suffering while comfort and ease have sometimes led to spiritual weakness?
10. How does Jesus entering into our suffering with us fundamentally change the nature of pain, and how can this truth sustain you in your current struggles?

# **Dinner Conversation Starters**

## **Finding Comfort in Suffering**

### **Introduction to Job – Part 2**

#### **1. Where Do We Turn When Life Hurts?**

When you've gone through something really painful or confusing, what (or who) did you actually turn to for help—and did it really carry you “through” the suffering or just distract you for a while?

#### **2. Is Comfort Our “False God”?**

Do you think we, as a family or culture, treat comfort (avoiding pain at all costs) like a kind of god? How might our priorities, schedules, or prayers look different if we truly believed God can use suffering for our good?

#### **3. What Have We Learned Through Hard Times?**

Can each of us name one difficult experience that, looking back, shaped our character or drew us closer to God? Would we trade that lesson to have skipped the suffering?

#### **4. Suffering and Relationships**

The sermon said suffering's “greatest cruelty is its isolation.” When someone we know is hurting, what keeps us from stepping in (awkwardness, fear of saying the wrong thing, busyness)? How could we be better friends and family to people in pain?

#### **5. Is Pain Always Bad?**

If pain can warn us of danger (like a hot stove) or wake us up spiritually, how should that change the way we pray about or react to suffering? Should we only ask God to remove it, or also to reveal His purpose in it?

# Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

## Finding Comfort in Suffering

### Introduction to Job – Part 2

#### AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **When Someone Is Mean or Leaves You Out**: When kids at school or on the playground are unkind, that hurts. Instead of just trying to avoid hurt (comfort at all costs), we learn to run to God and family.

#### Discussion Questions:

- (a) “Has anyone been mean to you or not wanted to play with you lately? How did that feel?”
  - (b) “What do you think Jesus feels when that happens to you?”
  - (c) “Next time that happens, who are two people you can talk to—at school and at home?”
2. **When You Make a Mistake (and Feel Bad About It)**: Suffering isn’t just what others do to us; sometimes it’s how we feel about our own wrong choices. Instead of hiding, we run to God, who forgives and helps us grow. “Jesus doesn’t run away when we do wrong. He came to help us and forgive us. Suffering is like a little alarm that says, ‘I need help from God and the people who love me.’”

#### Discussion Questions:

- (a) “Can you remember a time you did something wrong and felt really bad inside?”
  - (b) “Did you want to tell anyone, or did you want to hide?”
  - (c) “What do you think Jesus wants you to do when you feel that way?”
3. **Being Kind When Others Are Sad**: The sermon said, “Suffering’s greatest cruelty is its isolation.” Small kids can learn that when someone is sad, the best thing is to be with them.

#### Discussion Questions:

- (a) “Have you ever seen a friend crying at school or church? What did you do?”
- (b) “How do you feel when someone notices you’re sad and stays with you?”
- (c) “What is one kind thing you can do when you see someone sad—at school or on a playdate?”

#### AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Friendship Drama & Group Chats**: Being left out of a group chat, unkind comments in a text thread, or friends turning on you in a group—even in games like Roblox, Minecraft, etc. Instead of thinking, “My only goal is to make the pain stop by fitting in,” ask, “How can I invite God into this and respond like Jesus?”

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “Have you ever been hurt by something someone said in a group text or online game chat?”
- (b) “What did you want most in that moment—revenge, to be liked again, or to hide?”
- (c) “If you believed Jesus was with you in that chat, how might you respond differently?”

2. **Embarrassment, Bullying, and Feeling “Different”**: Being embarrassed at school, teased for appearance, grades, or interests. Hurt can push us toward isolation or toward God and caring people. Suffering can strengthen our identity in Christ, not just crush us.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “Has anyone ever made fun of you for something you like, wear, or believe?”
- (b) “What did their words make you think about yourself?”
- (c) “What do you think God says about you in that same moment?”
- (d) “If suffering (like being teased) can actually help us grow, what might God be teaching you about courage or kindness?”

3. **Comparing Yourself Online** Feeling sad or “less than” when seeing other kids’ posts, YouTube channels, talents, vacations, or looks. Instead of believing, “If I had what they have, I wouldn’t suffer,” we acknowledge our pain and take it to God, who gives us true identity and purpose.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “Have you ever watched a video or seen a post and felt like, ‘My life is boring,’ or ‘I’m not good enough’?”
- (b) “What do you usually do when you feel that way—scroll more, complain, or talk to someone?”
- (c) “How could you invite God into those moments—maybe a quick prayer like, ‘Jesus, help me remember who I am to you’?”

**AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS**

1. **Online Identity, Likes, and Cancel Culture**: Posting on social media (or group chats/Discord), getting few likes, getting mocked, or being “canceled” for an opinion or mistake. Instead of letting digital approval be your god, recognize that suffering (rejection, misunderstanding) exposes where your hope really is—and invites you back to Christ.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “Have you ever deleted a post or comment because it didn’t get enough likes or got a bad response? Why?”

- (b) “When someone disagrees with you or is harsh online, does it feel like an attack on your worth?”
- (c) “If Jesus is your deepest source of identity, how might that change how you handle online criticism or silence?”
- (d) “What would it look like to respond in a way that reflects Jesus instead of just protecting your comfort?”

2. **Friend Group Shifts, Rumors, and Betrayal**: A close friend stops talking to you, a group turns against you, or rumors spread at school or in youth group. Like Job’s experience of being abandoned by friends, relational suffering is painful, but it can draw you deeper into God’s presence and into healthier relationships.

*Discussion Questions:*

- (a) “Have you ever had a friend group shift and suddenly you weren’t part of it anymore?”
- (b) “What did that do to your sense of who you are?”
- (c) “Did you pull away from God and people, or did you talk to God and trusted adults about it?”
- (d) “If God sometimes uses suffering to shape us, what might He be shaping in you right now—discernment, courage, forgiveness, new friendships?”

3. **Doubting God When Life Hurts**: Personal pain (family conflict, anxiety, depression, serious disappointment) leading to questions like: “If God is good and powerful, why is this happening?” Especially amplified by what they see and hear online. Instead of pretending you’re fine or throwing out faith entirely, you bring honest questions to God, like Job did, and look to Jesus as the one who enters our suffering.

*Discussion Questions:*

- (a) “Have you ever thought, ‘If God really loved me, He wouldn’t let this happen’?”
- (b) “Are there painful things right now (in our family, school, or world) that make you question God’s goodness or power?”
- (c) “What do you think is more important to you right now: knowing exactly why you’re suffering, or knowing that God is with you in it?”
- (d) “What helps you feel God’s presence when life is hard—music, Scripture, prayer, talking to someone, serving others?”

**Tips for Parents**

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it’s okay to ask questions, even if things don’t make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

# Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

## Finding Comfort in Suffering

### Introduction to Job – Part 2

#### 1. When You're Hurt or Ghosted by Friends

*Bible Reference:* “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:18) Principle: God doesn't stay far away from your pain; He moves closer. Suffering is not proof of God's absence, but an invitation to experience His nearness.

*Application:* Instead of numbing your pain with distractions (scrolling, bingeing, hookups, self-harm), bring your hurt to God honestly and invite a trusted believer into it. Isolation is where suffering becomes cruel; presence is where it starts to heal.

*Scenario:* You're in a friend group chat and suddenly you notice everyone else is hanging out without you. You see a group photo on Instagram that makes it clear you were excluded on purpose. You feel angry, embarrassed, and deeply alone.

*Discussion:* When I feel rejected by friends, what do I actually run to first—God, distraction, or self-protection? What would it look like, practically, to invite God and one safe person into that rejection this week?”

#### 2. When Online Approval Feels Like Your Identity

*Bible Reference:* “For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? ... If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.” (Galatians 1:10) Principle: When human approval becomes your god, you will suffer deeply. But suffering from rejection can drive you back to the only approval that truly satisfies.

*Application:* See the anxiety you feel around likes, views, and DMs as a signal, not a sentence. It's a warning that you're building your identity on people's reactions instead of God's unchanging love in Christ.

*Scenario:* You post something vulnerable or faith-related on TikTok/Instagram. It gets way fewer likes than your lighter content, or you get mocking comments. You're tempted to delete it, hide your faith, and only post what gets quick validation.

*Discussion:* “How does my emotional state rise and fall with notifications? What is one concrete step I can take (like a posting fast, turning off certain

notifications, or praying before posting) that re-centers my worth on God instead of on my metrics?”

### **3. When You See Injustice, Evil, and Suffering Online**

*Bible Reference:* “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” (Matthew 5:6) Principle: Our outrage at evil and injustice is a clue that we were made for a just God and a just kingdom. Suffering should move us toward God’s heart and action, not just cynicism or despair.

*Application:* Instead of only doom-scrolling and complaining, bring global and local suffering to God in prayer and ask how He wants you to join Him—through advocacy, generosity, or serving.

*Scenario:* You constantly see posts about war, racism, school shootings, suicides, and abuse. Part of you is numb; part of you is angry at God: “If You’re real and good, why is this happening?”

*Discussion:* “When I see suffering and injustice online, am I more likely to (a) blame God, (b) shut down, or (c) bring it to God and ask, ‘How can I reflect Your justice and compassion here?’ What might ‘(c)’ look like in one specific situation I’ve seen recently?”

### **4. When You’re Tempted to Numb Pain with Sin**

*Bible Reference:* “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability... but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13) Principle: Suffering often increases temptation—to escape, numb, or self-medicate. God doesn’t just say “don’t”; He promises a real way of escape and strength to endure.

*Application:* Recognize that temptation spikes when you’re lonely, anxious, or hurting. Plan ahead: identify your “escape routes” (scripture, accountability, changing environment) before the moment hits

*Scenario* After a tough day—conflict at home, anxiety about school—you find yourself scrolling into late night, tempted to watch porn, DM that person just for attention, or binge content to avoid your feelings.

*Discussion:* “What are my top two ‘go-to’ escapes when I’m hurting? What is one practical ‘way of escape’ I can set up now (accountability app, texting a friend, moving my phone, specific prayer) that helps me run to God instead of into numbing sin?”

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.