

# Small Group Discussion + Leader Guide

**Sunday, May 17, 2026**

Preached By: Dr. Evan Posey

## **Understanding the Will of God: *The Eternal Weight of Glory***

### **Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)**

Icebreaker Question:

Share about a time when something difficult happened that you didn't understand at the moment, but later you saw purpose or growth come from it.

### **Sermon Recap (5 minutes)**

This final sermon in our series addresses one of life's most challenging questions: If we're living in God's will, why do we still experience pain, suffering, and evil? We explored God's sovereignty over suffering, humanity's responsibility for evil, and the redemptive purposes God accomplishes through our trials.

### **Discussion Questions**

#### ***Part 1: God's Relationship to Pain, Suffering, and Evil (15 minutes)***

1. The sermon compared God's responsibility for suffering to how parents are responsible for pain their children endure. How does this illustration help or challenge your understanding of God's sovereignty?

2. Read Isaiah 45:5-7. How do you reconcile God "creating disaster" with His character of love and goodness? What does this passage reveal about God's control over all circumstances?
3. In Job 13:15, Job declares, "Though He slay me, I will hope in Him." What would it take for you to have this level of trust in God during suffering? What obstacles prevent this kind of faith?
4. Discuss Joseph's perspective in Genesis 50:20: "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good." Can you identify a situation in your life where God has redeemed something evil for good?

***Part 2: Our Relationship to Pain, Suffering, and Evil (15 minutes)***

5. The sermon used the illustration of arsenic poisoning water to describe sin's effect on creation. How does understanding the pervasive nature of sin's corruption help explain why bad things happen?
6. Romans 8:19-22 describes all creation "groaning" under the curse. Where do you see evidence of this brokenness in the world around you? In your own life?
7. Read Romans 3:11-18. This is a sobering description of human depravity. How does recognizing our own sinfulness change how we view suffering—both ours and others'?
8. The sermon stated that "the devastating effects of the fall bend our will toward destruction." In what ways do you see this tendency in yourself? How does God's grace intervene?

***Part 3: Why God Allows Suffering (20 minutes)***

9. The immunization shot illustration suggests God allows temporary pain for long-term protection and health. What "immunizations" might God be giving you right now through difficult circumstances?

10. Read 1 Peter 1:3-9. Peter says trials prove the genuineness of our faith "more precious than gold." How have trials refined or tested your faith? What has been revealed through that testing?
11. According to 1 Peter 4:12-19, we shouldn't be surprised by suffering. Why do you think we're often caught off guard when bad things happen, even when we're following God?
12. The sermon quoted C.S. Lewis: "He wants servants who can finally become sons." How does this perspective shift your understanding of why God allows difficulty rather than just making us comfortable?
13. Hebrews 2 and 5 tell us that Jesus Himself was "perfected through suffering" and "learned obedience" through what He suffered. How does knowing Jesus experienced suffering help you in your own trials?

### **Key Takeaways**

#### ***Choose 2-3 to discuss as a group:***

- God is sovereign over all things, including pain, suffering, and evil, yet He is not the author of evil—He uses it redemptively for our sanctification.
- The fall of humanity corrupted all of creation, bending our wills toward destruction and subjecting the world to futility and groaning.
- God allows suffering in the lives of His children not to harm us, but to refine us, prove our faith, and conform us to the image of Christ.
- Our response to suffering reveals where we are in our relationship with God and our journey of sanctification.
- God is not distant in our suffering—Jesus Himself suffered and can sympathize with our weaknesses.

- God's goal is not our comfort but our holiness—He wants children, not pets.

## **Practical Applications**

***Choose 1-2 to commit to this week:***

### **Individual Reflection**

- Journal through a current difficulty: Write out how God might be using this trial to refine you, what it's revealing about your faith, and how you can trust Him more deeply.
- Study suffering in Scripture: Read through the book of Job or 1 Peter this week, noting what these books teach about God's purposes in suffering.
- Memorize a key verse: Choose one verse from this sermon (Job 13:15, Romans 8:28, 1 Peter 1:6-7, or 2 Corinthians 4:17-18) and commit it to memory.

### **Group Action**

- Support someone in suffering: Identify someone in your church or community going through difficulty. Commit as a group to pray for them and provide practical help this week.
- Share testimonies: At your next meeting, have members share how God has used past suffering redemptively in their lives.

### **Heart Posture**

- Practice lament: Give yourself permission to honestly bring your pain before God while still trusting His goodness (like the Psalms model).
- Shift your prayer focus: Instead of only praying for removal of trials, pray for God to accomplish His purposes through them and for grace to endure faithfully.

- Examine your view of God: Are you viewing God as a cosmic vending machine who should give you comfort, or as a loving Father who is making you holy?

### **Closing Reflection (10 minutes)**

#### **Read together: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer person is decaying, yet our inner person is being renewed day by day. For our momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

#### **Reflection Questions:**

- What "unseen" eternal realities do you need to focus on this week?
- How can this group support you in not losing heart during your current trials?

#### **Prayer Time (10 minutes)**

##### ***Suggested prayer format:***

1. Confession: Confess areas where you've doubted God's goodness in suffering or blamed Him for evil.
2. Thanksgiving: Thank God that He is sovereign and that He uses all things—even evil—for the good of those who love Him.
3. Intercession: Pray for group members currently experiencing trials, that they would experience God's presence and see His purposes.
4. Petition: Ask God for grace to trust Him in the "troughs" of life and to be refined rather than bitter through suffering.

## **For Next Week**

- Share with the group any insights or breakthroughs you experienced while applying this week's lesson.
- Come prepared to discuss how your view of God's will and suffering has changed through this sermon series.

## **Memory Verse for the Week:**

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."  
— Romans 8:28