

Things to Remember in Times of Suffering

How does a Christian endure times of intense tribulation, trial, or suffering?

Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.

- Let's begin with our own observations. Was there a moment where God spoke to you, showed you something new, or reminded you of a familiar truth through the message this week?
- Pastor Joel began our discussion by reminding us that many Bible heroes suffered...sometimes for doing God's will. How did it encourage you to learn that suffering isn't unique to you?

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

- **Suffering doesn't have the authority to steal your joy!** Whenever we're in seasons of trouble or suffering, it's so important to praise God through our circumstances. We truly need spiritual eyes to see what's beyond our circumstances and our suffering. When we worship in suffering, Jesus renews our joy, because joy is positional and not circumstantial. Has anyone discovered this truth...that our joy is renewed when we praise God through our circumstances? Let's discuss!
- **Suffering will reveal whether our faith is real or not.** Whenever a season of suffering strikes, we're tested in the fire to see whether our faith is real...or just fair weather faith. How does suffering reveal whether our view of God is Biblical, or if we've entertained a false view of God as a divine wish grantor?
- **Satan will use suffering to try to obscure your view of Jesus.** Satan loves to magnify our suffering so that it eclipses our view of the Son. He'll try to tell us that suffering proves that God doesn't care. He'll even tempt us to pull away from God when we should be drawing near. Satan will do everything in his power to get you to obsess over your suffering. With this in mind, what are some practical ways that we can magnify our view of God and minimize our situations when we're suffering?
- **Suffering can take you deeper in the gospel than you've ever been before.** We learned that suffering in life helps us to identify with the suffering of Jesus, and with the intense suffering associated with the gospel. Have you ever stopped to think that the gospel came to us through tremendous suffering? Also, did you realize that suffering came first, then glory? Let's discuss!

Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:

- Genesis 50:19-21
- Romans 8:28
- Romans 8:18
- 1 Peter 5:10
- Psalm 34:1
- Acts 16:25-32

Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?

- If you have been experiencing a time of suffering or pain in your own life, then how would our study this week motivate you to look at it differently? Would the Lord lead you to a new perspective in your suffering as a result of our study this week?
- We all probably know someone who has drifted from God in difficult times. What would you say to a person who remarked that they used to follow God but they stopped fellowshiping with God when times became hard? How might God use you to win a brother or sister back to fellowship?