

RIVERS CROSSING COMMUNITY CHURCH



Community Group Discussion Guide – Life In Technicolor Week #10

The Blessing of God's Sovereignty / November 21, 2021 / Pastor Jeff Sharp

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Questions | What are your plans for Thanksgiving? Do you have any family traditions on Thanksgiving? What's the best Thanksgiving-meal side – cranberry sauce, dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, sweet potato or green bean casserole, mac and cheese, pumpkin pie, or something else?
2. This was our final week studying Joseph's life in our series Life In Technicolor. We've examined family of origin struggles, when life is the pits, handling prosperity, the temptation of lust, waiting on God, God's prophetic words, putting God first with our finances, forgiveness, and finally God's sovereignty.

What have been your biggest takeaways and personal applications from Life In Technicolor? Where have you been challenged to grow in your understanding of God and what it looks like to follow Him?
3. Do you sometimes think of luck or chance as causing events that happen in your life? If you ever feel that way, does it increase or decrease your anxiety about the future?

Now think for a moment about some events that you might have attributed to luck in the past. Instead, begin to think about those events as under the control of your wise and loving heavenly Father. How does that make you feel differently about those events and about the future generally?¹

1. This question is adapted from Wayne Grudem's book *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Theology*

DIVING DEEPER

4. Joseph understood and lived with the perspective that God is sovereign over all situations, including the evil done to him by his brothers (Genesis 45:7-8). Pastor Jeff defined God's sovereignty by declaring that nothing happens that God does not allow or want to happen, and God's power and authority are greater than all others. Read the following Bible passages that reveal the sovereignty of God. Then discuss the corresponding questions.

Ephesians 1:11 (NLT) – Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

Job 42:1-2 (ESV) – ¹Then Job answered the Lord and said: ²"I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

Daniel 4:34-35 (ESV) – ³⁴"After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever. His rule is

everlasting, and his kingdom is eternal. ³⁵All the people of the earth are nothing compared to him. He does as he pleases among the angels of heaven and among the people of the earth. No one can stop him or say to him, ‘What do you mean by doing these things?’

Psalms 135:6-7 (NLT) – ⁶The Lord does whatever pleases him throughout all heaven and earth, and on the seas and in their depths. ⁷He causes the clouds to rise over the whole earth. He sends the lightning with the rain and releases the wind from his storehouses.

Matthew 10:29-30 (NLT) – ²⁹What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. ³⁰And the very hairs on your head are all numbered.

2 Chronicles 20:6 (ESV) – “...O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you.

Proverbs 16:9 (NLT) – We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.

Proverbs 16:33 (NLT) – We may throw the dice, but the Lord determines how they fall.

a) Describe the God you see represented in these verses. How does the doctrine of God’s sovereignty fit with your understanding of who God is and how he works in the world?

b) For many, including Christians, the all-encompassing nature of God’s sovereignty is a challenging truth. For example, what do we do with all the pain and suffering in the world in light of a sovereign God? Even if believed, the doctrine of God’s sovereignty is often held with a level of tension.

Have you experienced this challenge/tension before with God’s sovereignty? Has that come more from the intellectual side of trying to understand God and the world or the experiential side of trying to walk with God through a painful experience? If you’re willing, explain your answer.

5. Our understanding of a person’s character has a big impact on how we view, embrace, and even submit to that person’s power and authority. We all likely have experience with this, whether with our parents, bosses, teachers, coaches, mentors, pastors, etc. If this is true with people of limited sovereignty, how much truer is it with God? Our understanding of God’s character greatly shapes how we view God’s unlimited sovereignty. Read the following scriptures and discuss the corresponding questions.

Romans 11:33 (NIV) – Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

Isaiah 30:18 (ESV) – Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.

Romans 9:14 (NIV) – What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all!

Romans 15:9 (NLT) – He also came so that the Gentiles might give glory to God for his mercies to them. That is what the psalmist meant when he wrote: “For this, I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing praises to your name.”

Psalm 23 (NIV) – ¹The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. ²He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, ³he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. ⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Hebrews 12:7-10 (NIV) – ⁷Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? ⁸If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. ⁹Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! ¹⁰They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.

a) What aspects of God's character do you see in these passages? Do those give you any greater desire to embrace the sovereignty of God? Explain your answer.

b) Are there any aspects of God's character you struggle to find compatible with his sovereignty?

TAKING IT HOME

6. Pastor Jeff shared three blessings that flow in our lives when we embrace the sovereignty of God...

- 1) Peace, found in recognizing that we are not in control but God is
- 2) Humility, found in positioning ourselves under the loving care and provision of God
- 3) Comfort, found in trusting that God promises to work all things out for good

a) Which of these blessings resonates most deeply with you? Is there one you're in need of right now based on something you're walking through in life?

b) The sovereignty of God is one of the most splendid *and* imposing doctrines. But this doctrine about God is something that shouldn't just reside in our minds, it should impact the way we live!

How can you take what we've studied about God's sovereignty and bring it to bear in your everyday life? How can it impact your decisions, parenting, relationships, time with God, and so on?

Isaiah 41:10 (NIV) – So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

James 4:10 (NLT) – Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.

Romans 8:28 (ESV) – And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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RIVERS CROSSING – THINGS TO KNOW

1. **Men's Ministry Event** | Men's Ministry is hosting a watch party for the Thursday Night Football game on December 9th. The event begins at 8:00pm and will take place offsite at COhatch Mason. Snacks and drinks will be provided and men are encouraged to invite a friend to join. For additional information, including an address for COhatch Mason, visit <https://subsplash.com/riverscrossing/lb/ev/+5j2z7y9>.
2. **2022 Discipleship School** | Discipleship School is a one-year program that helps Christians from all backgrounds become fully engaged followers of Christ. The school helps students learn to hear God's voice clearly, experience a full and free life, develop intimacy with God, develop Christlike living, and understand their spiritual gifting. For more information, or to apply for the Discipleship School, click on the link below. <https://riverscrossing.com/discipleship-school/>
3. **Plan A Visit** | Have an individual or family you want to invite to Rivers Crossing? If so, we'd love for them to utilize our Plan A Visit tool. Share this link with them: <https://connect-card.com/zTE3I3TXmFG0TgizStLj>.