



GROUP GUIDE – Standing on the Promises - Wk 4

OPENER: 15-20 minutes

[note: sharing about times of suffering could open up any number of wounds; pray and ask the Holy Spirit to lead; if a tender moment arises, leaders/hosts may want to say, “Let’s pause and pray over this right now”; it may also be appropriate to ask someone to stay afterward to process and pray; reach out to your Community Life team for prayer support and/or advice; let us also remember that our brothers and sisters in Christ never intend to hurt us with platitudes but we all want to grow in learning how to love one another in times of suffering]

Has there ever been a time when you were suffering that someone offered you a scripture, intending to encourage you with it, but it felt like a platitude meant only to assuage your grief or pain? What did that feel like? How do you wish that person would have encouraged you in your suffering?

PRAY BRIEFLY FOR YOUR TIME TOGETHER: 2 minutes

“GOD WORKS ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR GOOD”

SCRIPTURE READING: Have everyone open their Bibles. Have one person read Romans 8:18-39. Read slowly enough for everyone to enjoy. Discuss the questions that follow.

Questions: 50 minutes

1. List all the references to groaning, suffering, or evil that you can find in these verses.
2. What sort of suffering do you think the Apostle Paul had in mind when he wrote this passage?
3. What truths did Paul provide to encourage people in and through their suffering?
4. How do these truths actually provide encouragement and hope for us when we suffer evil? Which truths are most important for you?
5. When you have opportunity to love or encourage someone who is suffering, how might you best present or demonstrate these truths so that they don’t come across like platitudes or “irrelevant religious language?”
6. Think of someone you know who is suffering under the impact of evil and discuss their circumstances with your group (be careful to maintain confidences). How might you or your group reach out to them with the love of Jesus and the encouragement of the gospel? Pray for them, asking God for specific opportunity to demonstrate your love and his love in their circumstance.

SURRENDER: 10 minutes

Each of you share one “thought” or “truth” gleaned from this passage that, if you are completely honest, you find hard to believe when you are suffering under the impact of evil.

CLOSING PRAYER: (10 minutes) Pray for one another; that you will learn to recognize God’s working in the midst of suffering evil, to expect that He will do something good as a result of it (without diminishing the evil), and to celebrate God’s goodness when you see it, in spite of the evil circumstances.