



## Week 1: If God is good, why is there evil? John 9:1-7 Message Notes

Big Idea for this week:

1.

2.

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the Sunday gathering. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family, and/or with your Life Group.

1. If you were to lose your sight, what one thing you would miss the most? Why? This man was born blind. Do you know anyone who is blind? What kind of limitations or hardships does blindness create in life? Think about this man. In the first century, what was the life of a blind man like? What kind of job could he do?

2. What do you think these verses reveal about Jesus? Why did Jesus say, "I am the light of the world" (v. 5)? What do these verses reveal about suffering?

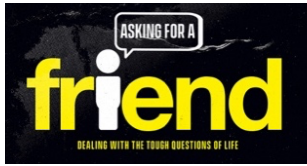
3. In this story, the people saw the blind man and asked Jesus who sinned? Jesus told them the specific reason for this particular disease. What did Jesus say? Why is this important? What role should suffering play in our life and in our world today?

4. Why is the "purpose of suffering" so hard for humans to understand? Why do you think people have trouble with faith or Christians leave the faith because of it? Where do you go when you struggle with these questions of faith? How do you seek to understand the hard things of Scripture? What miracles have you seen through the tragedies you have experienced?

5. Why did Jesus put spit and mud on the man's eyes? Why was it so important for the man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam? How does obedience to God fit into the problem of suffering?

6. **Share the Truth.** Is there someone in your life who is struggling with the question of suffering? Would you pray right now that the Holy Spirit will give you wisdom, grace, and truth to share hope with that person.

**Prayer: God, I'll never fully understand You or Your purposes. But I trust You. Will You help me to see Your purpose in all I go through? In Jesus' Name, Amen.**



## Week 2: Do I Really Need the Bible Today? 2 Timothy 3:14-17 Message Notes

Big Idea for this week:

1.

2.

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the Sunday gathering. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family, and/or with your Life Group.

1. How long had Timothy known the Scriptures (14-15)? Take a moment to reflect on how you've learned the Scriptures. Who are the people who taught you the Scriptures (and how to read them)? What is the expected progression of learning in growing in our faith?

2. Paul tells Timothy some incredible things about the Bible. What are they? What are some things that make the Bible so important and incredibly valuable to us as well? Reflect on your own journey of faith. Can you think of a time where you experienced God speaking to you in a very personal way through the Scriptures?

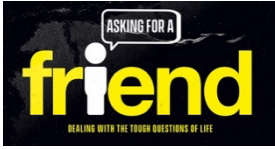
3. What does it mean that scripture is "God-breathed"? For what does Paul the Scripture profitable (16-17)? Why will a deeper understanding of God's word equip you "for every good work"? How have you experienced Scripture's usefulness in the areas of teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness? Which one do you think is the hardest for you to experience in your life?

4. The world obviously does not view the Bible the same way that we do. What would you say to persuade someone that the Bible is more than a highly biased history book?

5. How well do you know the Bible? What are some resources and practices that you have found helpful in trying to set aside regular time to read God's word? What practical steps can you take to incorporate more of God's Word into your life? How do you think this passage impacts the mission of the church? How does it call us to obedience and an others-focused mentality? How does it affect our knowing and growing?

6. **Share the Truth.** The Bible is seen by those outside the church as old. But the truth is, the Bible has great relevance for us inside the church. Pray for those who need God's Word.

**Prayer: God, Thank You for Your Word. Thank You for preserving it and protecting it and giving it to us today. Help me to grow in Your Word every day. In Jesus' Name, Amen.**



## Week 3: Doesn't God Want Me to Be Happy? 1 John 2:15-17 Message Notes

Big Idea for this week:

1.

2.

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the Sunday gathering. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family, and/or with your Life Group.

1. What does John mean by “the world” in these verses? Do you think this idea of the world may differ from its use in John 3:16? What do you think it means to love the world?

2. In 1 John 2, John uses the term world to refer to the unbelieving society, seen as hostile to God. John lists three typical features of the sinful world. What are they, and why does John command us to not love them? According to John, what does having a love for “the world” and the things of the world indicate about our relationship with God?

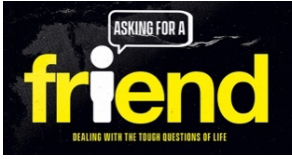
3. How do you think John would view a person seeking a life of happiness? Do you think he would point these things out as possible temptations for a person living for happiness? Worldly things are passing away and God is eternal. Why wouldn't a Christian try to love as much of the world as possible before they die since they will get to spend eternity with God? What are dangers with that type of thinking and lifestyle?

4. What is the fate of the world and these lusts? How should this truth cause us to respond to the temptations we face day in and day out? How should it impact our relationships with people who don't know Christ? Rather than becoming a victim to the world's way of thinking and living, Christians can be an influence for the gospel and for God. Share an example of a Jesus follower influencing a person or culture in a positive manner.

5. Do you struggle with any of these specific temptations? Why do you think these are a struggle? What does it look like to fight and avoid worldly temptations in your daily life?

6. **Share the Truth.** We all know people who live for happiness. Pray for God's leading to share true joy and contentment, rather than chasing after fleeting happiness.

**Prayer: God, this world wants me to chase after so many things. Would You please help me want only You and chase after You alone? In Jesus' Name, Amen.**



## Week 4: Does it even Matter What I Believe? 1 Kings 18:16-39 Message Notes

Big Idea for this week:

1.

2.

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the Sunday gathering. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family, and/or with your Life Group.

1. This is one of the best stories we have recorded in the Bible. It would have been an incredible sight to behold. Reread the entire story in 1 Kings 18:16-39. Is there anything new you learned? What surprises you in this passage?
2. Look at how the prophets of Baal prayed. How do Elijah's prayers contrast with the prayers of the prophets of Baal? Do you think this matters? What can we learn about our own prayer life from this story? Why did God respond to Elijah's prayers?
3. The people of Israel were worshipping both Baal and Yahweh. Why is this sort of thing not alright? The people had heard the stories of how God worked in their past and saw God work for them. Why had they decided to also worship Baal? How do you think God felt about that?
4. Think about our lives today. Do we do the same thing as the Israelites? Do we worship both God and something else? What are some of the "false gods" that we serve in our own lives? Are there ways we "dance" and "bleed" in our effort to serve them? How do you think that influences the way we live? The way we pray?
5. What keeps you from going "all in" in regards to living out your faith in God? Why do you think other "gods" still hold sway in your life? How do you think we defeat these false gods and follow after the One True God? What is one thing you can do this week to actively give up false gods, and solely live for the God of Elijah? How can someone keep you accountable to this goal?
6. **Share the Truth.** Many people "add God" to their life, but God doesn't want to just be an addition. Seek opportunities to share how God is the only One in your life.

**Prayer: God, I want to live for You and You only. Help me to live my life so that I don't try to fill my life with things that will never produce what I need. In Jesus' Name, Amen.**