

JESUS' SUFFERING AND YOUR SUFFERING SON OF GOD-THE LIFE OF JESUS IN YOU SESSION 3

Ice breaker

1. There was a book called, "*The Red Badge of Courage*". Share with the group a badge of courage you think Jesus might give you, for something really hard you have gone through but by God's help, you didn't give up and grew better instead of bitter.
2. Come up with a creative new ending to this statement: When the going gets tough, the tough _____

Memory verse:

"We also rejoice in our suffering because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character and character hope." (Romans 5:3-4 NIV)

Introduction: The Bible tells us that Jesus was "*a man of sorrows, acquainted with our grief, he was despised and rejected.*" His sorrows and suffering started long before the cross. Yet, He went through it in a way that turned ashes into beauty. We want to learn how to let Jesus in us walk us through our sorrows and suffering, as He did in His journey here on earth.

We want to look at some of God's purposes and perspectives for suffering.

A. Suffering produces _____.

*"Jesus... for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning the shame."
(Hebrews 12:2 NIV)*

1. You can either panic or _____ under pressure.

*"We don't want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardship we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead."
(2 Corinthians 1:8-9, NIV)*

2. Paul learned through suffering that if he tried to handle his stress on his own it would overwhelm him but if he leaned into God's power he could handle anything.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13, NKJV)

B. Perseverance produces _____.

“Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:2-4, NIV)

C. Character _____.

When you go through suffering, you can face it with resentment or gratitude, with complaining or rejoicing; with worry or worship; with fear or faith; with self-dependence or self-surrender.

When you ask God “Why?” and demand an explanation, you’re not really looking for an answer; you’re looking for _____.

Instead of saying, “God, why are You doing this to me?” You should say what Jesus said: *Father, not my will, but your will be done. (Mat. 26:42)* Do whatever it takes to make me like Jesus in this trial I’m facing. My life is in Your hands.

In a sailboat race all boats are in the same race with the same wind and rudders but they all go different speeds and may end up in different places, depending on how they set their sail. In the same way, the sail that we have to navigate in times of adversity, is a mindset and attitude we choose in the trial. If we make the choice to rejoice, to pray not panic, to trust not doubt, to be better and not bitter, God can guide us to His intended shores.

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

1. If a friend of yours were going through a hard time and asked you, “If God loves me, why is He allowing me to suffer,” how would you answer that question?
2. If you think of a hardship in your life, something rubbing you wrong as the grain of sand in an oyster, that can be handled in a way that produces a pearl; what area of your life today would you say God is trying to form a pearl in you?
3. Are you more prone to pray “comfort me” prayers or “conform me” prayers? What is the difference between the two?
4. Which of the following reactions to hardship or people’s rejection and betrayal is hardest for you to let go of? When upset do you tend to be more like a turtle or a skunk? How might you like your group to be in prayer with you about this.
(anger, fear, resentment, self-pity, blame, exploding on others, worry, anxiety, resignation, complaining, withdrawing into a shell and isolating myself)

(Answers: perseverance, persevere, character, produces hope, an argument)