



If God is so loving, why is there suffering?

Bottom Line: The purpose of suffering is our perfection.

Key Scripture: Romans 5:1-5

A Note To Group Leaders:

*Keep in mind the goal of every meeting is to create meaningful conversation and connection.
Feel free to choose a few questions for discussion and adjust questions as needed.*

The Setup

It's hard to reconcile suffering's existence and horrible toll with the reality of a loving God. Suffering can shake our faith and cause us to turn away from God. Suffering can also be an opportunity to ignite and strengthen our faith. During this study you will look at the hard realities of suffering and how God is not the cause for evil in the world, but our rescue through the pain.

Thought Starters

What kinds of situations would you classify as "suffering?"

What makes suffering so tragic?

Questions For Reflection

Read Romans 5:1-2

What does it mean to "*have peace with God?*" Where does grace come in?

What does it mean for someone who believes in Jesus Christ to have and "*rejoice in the hope of the glory of God?*" Should God take away all pain and suffering for His followers? What about those who don't believe in Him? Explain.

Read Romans 5:3-5

Why would someone want to "*rejoice in suffering?*" How do we "*rejoice?*"

How would you define perseverance? Character? Hope? What about the process of going from suffering to hope shows you the true character of God?

If God promises to "*pour out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit,*" why do many people still reject God on the basis of pain in the world? Do you think these people would believe in God if pain disappeared? Why or why not?

Application In Your Life

Read Romans 8:22-28 and Psalm 108:8-13

How do these verses support or differ with your understanding of suffering and God's role?
How would you explain God's role in suffering to another person?

How can a person learn to look beyond temporary suffering to that which is "not seen"?
How does persevering through suffering please God?

How can you be a genuine comfort to someone who is suffering?
How can you personally rely on God more during a time of personal suffering?

Table Talk

This week, spend one meal together with your spouse or a trusted friend discussing the memory verse and questions below. Through this time, you will learn how to integrate God's Word into your everyday life and closest relationships.

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.." Psalm 23:4

What is the greatest suffering you are currently experiencing or have experienced recently?
How has it affected your life? Your thoughts? Where do you need God's guidance and how might your suffering bring about good in your life or a life of someone around you?

Close your mealtime in prayer, thanking God for His unending and unending love. Ask for His protection and guidance through Christ in every aspect of your situation.

Go A Little Further

READ James 1:2-4; 5:11 as a quiet time this week.

James was no stranger to difficulties and suffering. He watched as his brother, Jesus, was crucified; as Herod killed James, the brother of John; and as Peter narrowly escaped the same fate. Under his leadership, the church experienced persecution, and he was ultimately stoned to death. Yet James encouraged Christians with Job's story. Read the passages again, and think of how James' words apply to your trials and suffering. How are your trials developing perseverance? Why is it hard to feel blessed? Where do you need God's strength and compassion?

READ the Book of Job over the next two weeks.

In as little as 15 minutes a day, you will experience from one of the oldest books and stories in the Bible what happens when we rest in the faith and truth of God's goodness and the hope of His redemption. When there are no rational or, even, theological explanations for disaster and suffering, what does it mean for us to simply trust God?

STUDY *Collisions: My Expectations-God's Character by Life Bible Study.*

Download this four-week study from www.lifebiblestudy.com and study more on what happens when our understanding of God collides with the hard realities of our world. In this four weeks you will look at the lives of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and Job, real people who struggled with real issues.