

Virtual Communities - Life Group Guide

Romans 8:16-18

Making sense of Suffering

Read

Read Romans 8:16-30

Background

In this study we looked at two key things we need to understand about suffering:

- 1 - Suffering is not part of God's design
- 2 - God uses suffering to change us
 - What events during the last 200 years are examples of global national suffering?
 - What events can you think of that might be examples of personal suffering (not necessarily your own, but suffering that might affect anyone)?
 - What does this tell you about the nature of suffering?

Weekly Questions For One Another

- What is God saying to you in His Word, in the sermon, or in your walk with Him this week?
- Is there **one** challenge that you sense the Lord giving you at the moment?
- How can we as a group be part of giving you courage today?
- Is there **one** thing you would like prayer for?
- Is there **one** community issue that you know needs prayer?

Discussion Questions

1. FROM THE STUDY

a. Suffering is not part of God's design

- i. God designed a perfect, suffering-free world until sin entered it
 1. Genesis 1:31
- ii. God has done something about suffering so that it no longer has the last say
 1. Jesus
 - a. 1 Peter 2:24
 - b. Acts 1:3
 2. The Church - a foretaste and signpost
 - a. Luke 6:3
 - b. Proverbs 3:27
 - c. Galatians 6:9
 - d. What does it mean for the church to be a foretaste and signpost?
How does this happen?

b. God uses suffering to change us

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- i. Read Philippians 1:12. Suffering advanced the gospel. This refers to the evangelising of the world, but also the advance of sanctification in Paul's life
- ii. What Bible stories do you relate to, where suffering was used by God to shape the character of a person?

2. FURTHER STUDY

- a. Read Mark 4:3-20
 - i. What is significant about the two of the three soils that failed to produce a crop?
 1. The rocky soil pictures those who receive the word joyfully at first, but do not sink down roots, so that when affliction or persecution comes, they fall away.
 2. The thorny ground reflects those who seem to grow for a while, but then allow, among other things, the worries of the world to choke out the word so that it does not bear fruit unto eternal life
 3. If we don't learn how to handle suffering we will not persevere as a Christian.
- b. Read 1 Peter 5:6-14
 - i. Peter gives us four strategies for growing solid through suffering, can you spot them?
 1. Answers:
 - a. humble yourself before God (6-7)
 - b. resist the devil (5:8-9)
 - c. trust the sovereignty of God (5:10-11)
 - d. stand firm together in grace (5:12-14)

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