

Small Group Guide
The Gospel, God's Sufficiency, and Suffering
Cleary Baptist Church, January 23, 2011, Job 3-31

Connect . . .

Think about a time in your life when you have experienced suffering. Discuss the following questions:

- Did you ever ask God, "Why do I have to go through this?"
- What comforted you during that time of suffering?
- How did this time of suffering affect your relationship with God?

Suffering affects everyone. It is present in our lives often and sometimes the effects of suffering linger, therefore it is imperative that we have a proper perspective on suffering.

Biblical Truths . . .

The Sufficiency of God in Suffering...

- When the pain of suffering persists, God is still present .
- We want an explanation .
- He gives us Himself.

Discussion Questions:

- Someone read Job 3:1-26. What is Job's response to the lingering effects of the suffering he has experienced?
- What is the main question that he asks? (see. 3:11, 12, 16, 20, 23) Can you identify with Job and see that the first question that people usually ask during suffering is, "Why?"
- Why do you think people feel that what they need is an explanation of why they are suffering?
- Enlist a volunteer to read Job 7:17-19. What does this passage say about God's presence with us?
- How did God demonstrate His presence with us in Christ in the midst of our suffering?

Application . . .

- Share a time when someone's presence was the relief that they needed while suffering.
- How do you feel when you are suffering and someone tries to give their thoughts on what you're going through? Does this ever completely comfort you?
- In what ways have you experienced God's presence while you were suffering?
- Why is it comforting to know that God is with us in the midst of our suffering?

Biblical Truth....

When the gifts we enjoy are gone, God is still good .

- A false gospel...Sees suffering as evidence of the displeasure of God.
- The true gospel...Sees suffering as a means to more deeply treasure God.

Discussion Questions:

- Someone read Job 8:3-7. What does Job's friend, Bildad, say about the suffering of Job's children and Job himself?
- All of Job's friends tried to convince him that he was suffering because of some sin in his life. Someone Job 9:22-24. What does Job say about suffering?
- David defined suffering as "the taking away of things of this world that we enjoy – our reputation, success, esteem among peers, job, money, friends, health, sight, hearing, spouse, children, etc." Do you agree with this definition? Why or why not?
- How can the loss of things in our life actually help us in terms of eternity?
- How does Jesus' death on the cross give us a proper perspective of suffering?

Application . . .

- What are ways that we promote a "false gospel" concerning suffering?
- How can treasuring God help us to face suffering? Does anyone have a specific example they would like to share?
- How can suffering actually lead us to happiness?

Biblical Truth....

In the confusion of our circumstances, God is all- wise.

- The limited wisdom of man...
 - _ We lack knowledge .
 - _ We lack perspective .
 - _ We lack experience .
- The unlimited wisdom of God...
 - _ He has perfect knowledge.
 - _ He has eternal perspective.
 - _ He has infinite experience.

Discussion Questions:

- Someone read Job 28:12-28. What are three facets of wisdom seen in this passage?
- Has anyone ever said, “If I’d known that, I would have done things differently?” Do you believe it is true that our knowledge is incredibly limited, therefore we cannot rely on our knowledge to guide or comfort us in the midst of suffering?
- Someone read Job 28:23-24 again. What does Job say about God’s knowledge, perspective, and experience?
- Someone read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. What does the gospel say about our wisdom and God’s wisdom?

Application . . .

- Why do we fail sometimes to believe that the suffering we encounter is the best thing for us at that time?
- If we understand that God’s knowledge, perspective and experience are perfect, what would keep us from trusting Him when we suffer?

Biblical Truth.....

- In the depth of our despair, God is our hope!
He will heal our bodies.
We will see His face.

Discussion Questions:

- Two people read Job 6:8-10 and 7:13-16. Do you believe Job is in complete despair? Why or why not?
- Someone read Job 19:23-27. What is the turning point in this passage?
- Someone read Romans 8:18-23. According to Paul, what is the proper perspective of suffering

Application . . .

- David said that our glimpse of the face of God is strongest, clearest, and most powerful from the depth of our despair. Why do you think this is true?
- David said that a “cancer survivor” is not someone who has lived through cancer, but someone who has found hope in God in the midst of cancer. How can this be true for every instance of suffering in our life?
- Someone read Revelation 22:1-5. What is our only true hope in the end?

End your time by praying as a group for any of the participants who are in the midst of suffering, for those in our Church body at Cleary who are suffering, and for our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world who may be suffering.