

God Doesn't Waste Pain

Big Idea: Growth most often occurs in the context of painful experiences. God never abandons us in those times. He is always there to comfort and strengthen us through them.

In this session, the characters think about and discuss the causes of their suffering:

- Other's sinful choices
- Their own bad judgment
- The devil
- The natural order of death and disease

But more important than understanding the cause is understanding what we can expect from God in the midst of suffering.



1. What did each character gain from pain?

- Gerry - learning that he didn't have the strength or wisdom to deal with Erik and he needed the power of the Holy Spirit to do so.
- Bill - gained humility and redirected priorities
- Steve - learned how to deal with his own pain and thus how to help others
- Linda - caused her to trust God with her son and his relationship with Gerry
- Oscar - learned to confess and receive forgiveness and hope
- Raz - dependence on anything other than Christ is insufficient

2. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.

a. What does God promise concerning our pain?

God promises to comfort us in all of our troubles.

b. How are we to respond to God's promise?

We are to comfort others with the comfort God has given to us.

3. Have you ever experienced God comforting you when you were in pain? Describe how He comforted you.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows."

2 Corinthians 1:3-5

4. When people are in pain, do they seek comfort from you? Why do you think that is?

5. Read Romans 5:3-5. Why does Paul say that we should rejoice in our sufferings?

Suffering produces Godly character which results in hope through our circumstances. As a result, God doesn't waste the pain. On the contrary, the pain results in spiritual growth.

“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

Romans 5:3-5

6. What painful circumstances are you struggling with currently and how are you doing with them?

7. How can the group assist you?

“Whatever gets dumped into our lives, whatever the source, whether it is bitter or sweet, God can make artful use of it as He makes us over to look like His son.... We just need to remember one thing: We do not always come out “winners” from these trials. We won’t necessarily end up healthier, wealthier, and more comfortable. We will end up stronger and wiser – when we respond properly. But among the heroes in faith’s “Hall of Fame” in Hebrews 11, we find people who were tortured, jeered at, flogged, chained, and imprisoned. Some were stoned, sawn in two, and killed by the sword. They wandered about destitute and mistreated, living in caves and holes in the ground. These were among the ‘heroes’! Life, for them, did not end with a comfortable retirement.

“God does not promise that He will make our sufferings go away. What He does promise is that He will be right in there with us, inseparable from us, giving us everything we need to win out over the evil, even while we are, by human standards, losing.” Jim Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship*, pp. 134-135

Suggested Additional Reading:

Read chapter 9 of *Lifestyle Discipleship*