



The Life of Job

The topic of suffering poses some the deepest questions human beings struggle with. Why is there suffering? Why does God allow it? Does the fact that we suffer mean there is no God? Or, that He is not good?

When pain comes our way, we are not prepared; it takes us by surprise because we expected (even thought we were entitled to) an easy life. In the midst of our pain, we are impatient, looking for a quick fix. Seeking escape, we anesthetize ourselves. When pain comes to others, we have no idea how to help, so we isolate and avoid them, or add insult to their injury with meaningless platitudes.

Where do we find wisdom to help us make sense of suffering? What does the Bible have to say on the subject? Should Christ-followers expect a life that is free from suffering? Isn't it God's job to protect us from pain? The story of Job offers an unexpected perspective.

Week Two: The Healing Power of Lament

Text: Job 3

Discussion Questions:

The following are based on the "My Application" Questions found in the bulletin this week. (Leader urge your group members to attend worship—or watch the sermon

online—and to spend time considering and answering those questions before coming to the group. This will produce a richer discussion time.)

- Have you been through a suffering experience and tried to share your raw emotions with a friend? With God? How did it go? Do you hesitate and hold back? Why?
- Lament is common in the Bible. Compare Job 3 with Psalm 88. What strikes you important in these passages? Do you feel uncomfortable with what you read?
- Examine Job 3:25. What have you feared most about life? Has what you most feared ever happened to you?
- How does lament communicate trust in God? See Jesus' lament in Mark 15:34. Is there something you're feeling about God that you have been afraid to say to Him? Why?

Prayer:

Probably some members of your group are currently suffering pain or loss. Maybe all of you are. Take the time, as a group, to sit together with God in grief. Allow some time for group members to quietly reflect on and acknowledge their suffering to themselves and to God. After a few minutes encourage those who are willing to express their laments to God. Keep it simple: "God, I'm hurting because of _____. I haven't been willing to express this, but right now I'm trusting you and these friends to understand and accept me in this."

If no one in the group is comfortable expressing this aloud, you as the leader can pray for the group a similar, general prayer.

This is not at time to make suggestions or give advice to your friend (or to God) about what to DO. It's just a time to mourn and lament—weep with those who weep.

Application:

This week, set aside time to consider this: What area of pain in your life do you need to “air” before God? Take the time to do so. Maybe you could go for a long walk or drive alone with Him and talk to Him out loud, like a friend. Or write Him a letter. Don’t worry about sounding spiritual or whether He will accept what you say. Just lay it out there. God can take it!

Scripture Memory:

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

Matthew 5:4