

Growth Group Preparation Questions
For the week of May 8, 2022
How Can a Loving God Allow Suffering?

Big Idea: Suffering is a puzzle that God's Word helps us understand.

Goal: To explain and provide comfort related to suffering.

Prepare

This week we're diving into Scripture asking God to explain and provide comfort related to suffering. The personal preparation time and discussion are meant to help us flesh out what we've learned through the sermon and apply it more thoroughly in our lives together.

Watch Pastor Shawn's sermon, *How Can a Loving God Allow Suffering*, noting anything memorable and impactful as you go.

Pray: Father, teach us to find comfort in You even when we or those close to us go through suffering.

Connect

1. Tell a story about a person God placed in your life (pick one)...
 - a. Who kept you from making a big mistake.
 - b. Who is a remarkably good listener.
 - c. Who gave you courage to endure something difficult.

Discussion Take some time to personally reflect on these questions after viewing the sermon and before your G2. It could make for a great morning devotional time! You can type and save your responses in the FBC app privately if you would like.

1. How have you clearly seen God work for the good in the midst of suffering?
2. Tell about a time God felt distant to you and how you got through it (if you did).
3. **Read 2 Cor. 1:3-5.** How have you experienced comfort from God in the midst of suffering?
 - a. Which Bible stories or passages bring you comfort in the midst of suffering?
 - b. How have other believers helped you through suffering or how have you helped others through it?

4. Which of the 3 puzzle pieces do you find most helpful or reassuring for your suffering and why? As a reminder, the 3 are: 1. God didn't create a broken world. 2. Suffering doesn't mean God is distant. 3. Christians have the promise God will redeem our suffering.
 - a. Which do you think will be most useful in discussions with people who don't trust Jesus and why?
 - b. Who, if anyone, in your life right now needs to hear one or more these truths? How will you engage them and how can your growth group pray for you?
5. What difference would it make if you stopped asking *why* God is allowing you to suffer and start asking *what* He is doing through it?

Closing Prayer This prayer section is a guide to help process with God what you've learned about Him and yourself through the sermon, personal preparation time, and discussion, seeking the Holy Spirit's power in applying it in your life. Sharing these responses in your G2 helps others gain insight into God and themselves while also encouraging toward growth.

Admire: What have you learned about God through this sermon, discussion, and Scripture? Praise Him for it. **Possible response:** God we praise You because You are simultaneously sovereign, good, and loving.

Admit: What has the Holy Spirit revealed to you as areas where you are falling short? Confess it to God. **Possible response:** God, we confess we tend to blame You in some times of suffering rather than looking for the good You are working.

Aspire: What is a specific change you want to see in your life or action you and/or your G2 could take based in this time of interaction? **Possible Response:** God help us ask *what* You want to do through suffering rather than *why* we are suffering.

Ask: Keep track of requests and celebrations from others in your G2 and pray for them.