DISCUSSION GUIDE

MARCH 22 | WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SUFFERING?

Note to Leaders: Every group is different, please choose the questions that relate best to your particular group.

FOR STARTERS

1. Check-in time—how's everyone doing, how's your family, etc?

2. Share a time where pain and suffering drove you to question God. How did you, or are you, working through it? What helped and what didn't/doesn't?

DIGGING IN

1. Genesis begins telling us about God's very good world. Perfect relationships with God and each other, perfect harmony in creation. What went wrong? Read Genesis 3:1–19.

    a. How does this passage explain things like suffering, pain and death—things like COVID-19?

    b. What changed?

    c. How did things change?

    d. A one-word answer to the changes from Genesis 3 is the word SIN. What did God do about our sin? Don't miss the promise in 3:15—but there's more.

2. What is God's take on suffering? Look up the following verses, dive in and share:

    a. Exodus 3:7

    b. Deuteronomy 26:6–9

c. Isaiah 53:3–6 (A prophesy about Jesus' sufferings.)

d. Revelation 21:1–5

3. How can or could suffering be positive? Think of your own experiences and look up these verses which give a sampling of God's commitment to those who love Him to bring good out of the hard:

a. Romans 5:3–4, also James 1:2-4

b. 2 Corinthians 1:3–4

c. Hebrews 12:7–11

BRINGING IT HOME

1. Marc is fond of saying, "We never know what a day holds." How ready are you to face suffering? What are the resources you have and what ones are missing or lacking?

2. Are you inclined to embrace suffering and let it drive you to the one who suffered for you, or push it aside? Explain.

3. Share stories of how God has used "hard" things and times of suffering for your good.

4. Pray for each other and for those you know who are going through tough times. Pray through Psalm 20 for each other and those mentioned.

Going Deeper: This week meditate on (and hopefully memorize) Psalm 23.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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