

## Message Discussion Guide THE GOSPEL, GOD'S POWER, AND SUFFERING

*The Church at Brook Hills,*

*Dr. David Platt*

*August 31, 2008*

*Job 38-42*

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This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

### **Connect . . .**

*Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.*

#### **Option 1**

Explain that sometimes we experience God in ways that are different from anything we have ever known. For example, experiencing a natural disaster can allow for us to experience the provision and peace of God.

Invite learners to share a time when they have experienced suffering and experienced knowing God more fully. Ask the following questions:

- How did you initially respond to God in your suffering?
- Did your reaction change over time?
- What did you learn about God?
- What did you learn about yourself?

Explain that we will now look at what the book of Job indicates about God's revelation through suffering.

#### **Option 2**

Ask the following questions and allow learners to discuss their answers for a few minutes:

- Is knowing God more, fully worth the pain of our suffering?
- What does our answer reveal about our relationship with God and/or our pursuit of having an intimate relationship with Him?

Explain that we will now look at what the book of Job indicates about God's revelation through suffering.

### **Review the Message . . .**

#### **The Conclusion . . .**

- **What we want in our suffering . . .**
  - **An explanation from God.**
- **What we receiving in our suffering . . .**
  - **A revelation of God.**

#### **Discussion Questions**

- Invite a couple of volunteers, preferably with different Bible translations, to read the passage headings in their Bibles beginning with Job 38 and continuing through Job 42. Do any of the headings note that God was giving Job an explanation for his suffering? What do they note?

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- Enlist a volunteer to read Job 42:1-6. Did Job's reaction to God's response indicate that Job was still searching for a reason for his suffering? What does this indicate about what Job truly desired in his suffering? How did God meet that desire?
- What does God's response indicate about His power in suffering?

#### *Application . . .*

- Why do we want an explanation of suffering? Do we believe that an actual theological explanation for our suffering will bring peace and comfort? Why or why not?
- Would a sufficient explanation for our specific suffering, void of knowing God, provide any joy or hope?
- David stated that suffering drives us to the greatness of God. If we are not driven to God in suffering, where are we driven? What is the alternative?

#### **The Revelation of God in Suffering . . .**

- **His power is great.**
  - **He is our Creator.**
  - **He is our Sustainer.**
  - **He is our Savior.**
  - **He is our Friend.**

#### **Discussion Questions**

- Read Job 38:4-18, 39-41. What does God reveal about Himself to Job through these verses?
- What does God's role as Sustainer of creation indicate about His relationship with His creation?
- Enlist a volunteer to read Job 38:25-27. Why would God care for land where humans do not live? What does this action indicate about God's creation? Who is truly at the center of creation/the universe?
- Invite a volunteer to read Job 40:10-14. Who does God indicate is the only one who can save Job?
- Remind learners that the name used for "Lord" in Job 38:1 is the covenant name between God and His people. Also, God's use of the word "servant" to describe Job in Job 42:7-9 indicates an intimate relationship between God and Job. Considering these truths, how did God view Job?

#### *Application . . .*

- How do our attitudes and actions often portray ourselves knowing as much as or more than God?
- Seeing God as our Creator and the one who sustains us, what is the truth about God's knowledge and care of us?
- Do we sometimes see God as getting pleasure from our pain? How can believing such a lie affect what we believe about God?
- How does considering God as our friend affect the way that we view His relationship with us? How does it affect the way we view our suffering in this world?

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- His purpose is **guaranteed**.
  - Satan's attempts to **attack** God's people only serve to **accomplish** God's purpose.

### Discussion Questions

- Enlist a volunteer to read Job 42:2. What did Job fully believe about God's purposes?
- What does this quote from Job indicate about his belief in God's responsibility for Job's suffering?
- Invite two volunteers to read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 and Acts 1:8, 8:1-3. How might Satan believe that he had victory in these instances when they happened? How did God use these times of suffering to further His plan?

### Application . . .

- Can anything or anyone disrupt the plans of God? How does that change how we view inconveniences, plans-gone-wrong, or suffering?
- If we believe that God has full, sovereign control over all things, do we sometimes give Satan more credit than he deserves for our suffering?
- How can we have hope that God's sovereignty can work through suffering for His Glory?
- How can we place all of our circumstances in God's hands? How can we have a sense of freedom when we leave our unexpected circumstances, pain, and suffering to God?

- His knowledge is **perfect**.
  - He knows **all things** comprehensively.
  - He knows **each of us** completely.

### Discussion Questions

- Read Job 42:3-4. What is Job confessing about his assumed knowledge?
- Job declares that he spoke of things he did not know. Does Job ever mention that his lack of an explanation is the knowledge that he lacked from God?
- What does Job declare about God's knowledge?

### Application . . .

- One of the stories of suffering that David read noted that we should be suspicious of a God who does not know more than we do or a God whom we could fully comprehend. How is it easier to trust a God who has perfect and comprehensive knowledge over one that does not?
- Job never received an answer to his question of "why." Yet he was able to trust in His God who did have all of the answers. Is this trust easy or difficult? Why?

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- How can a lack of answers increase our trust and dependence upon God?
  
- His mercy is personal.
  - Our initial reaction is awe.
    - We repent of our sin.
  - Our eternal response is adoration.
    - We rejoice in our God.

### Discussion Questions

- Invite two volunteers to read Job 42:5-6 and James 5:11.
- How would you describe Job's response to God? How did Job's journey bring him to a place where he could worship God with awe?
- How did Job's journey of suffering change his view of God?

### Application . . .

- How can suffering change our view of God?
- How can we ensure that suffering ultimately leads us to truth about God instead of false theology?
- How does what we believe about God affect how we respond to Him during suffering and possibly afterwards?
- Looking forward to eternity, Christ-followers are certain to experience the ultimate end of suffering. What kind of hope does this bring? What reaction toward God does that truth bring?

### The Ultimate Question . . .

Do you know for sure that you will spend eternity rejoicing in the great God that is revealed throughout Job?