



SMALL GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

Roots of Our Belief: Why Suffering?

September 23rd, 2018



Light Bulb:

Have a few group members take one of the following passages and read it out loud:

II Corinthians 4:16-18 // I Peter 4:12-13 // II Corinthians 1:3-5 // Job 2:10

Question: What stuck out to you as you heard these passages read? What do they say about how a Christian experiences suffering?



Sermon Outline:

Intro. The problem of suffering and evil has been called “The Rock of Atheism”.

Question: For what reasons could this issue drive people toward atheism? What experiences have you had discussing this with those you know?

1. Why is there suffering and evil?
 - a. Mankind’s willful sin (Genesis 3, Romans 8:20-22)
 - b. Can’t God stop it if he is good, loving, and powerful?
 - i. He is good, and desires that one day all suffering will be no more.
 - ii. He is loving, and suffered for us, so that we won’t suffer always.
 - iii. He is almighty, and all evil (which he has defeated) will be eliminated ONE DAY. But not yet.
2. What to do with suffering and evil?

There WILL BE suffering in this life. (John 16:33) Anyone who says otherwise is lying.

 - a. **Let it draw you closer to God –**
 - i. I Peter 1:3-7 – Faithfulness through trials results in praise, glory, and honor for Jesus Christ
 - ii. Daniel 3:15-18 – Shadrach/Meshach/Abednego would not bow to Nebuchadnezzar’s idol – regardless of whether or not God delivered them.
 - iii. **Read and discuss the section on the next page entitled “The Cross.”** One great comfort in our suffering is knowing that we are not alone in it, but that Christ relates to it because he has EXPERIENCED it, too.
 - b. **Use it to help others – Read II Corinthians 1:3-5**
 - i. The experiences of your life have shaped you uniquely. **Question: What sufferings have you experienced? Who could benefit from the comfort you could give because of the sufferings you have experienced and the hope you have in Christ?**
 - c. **Use it as a teacher –**
 - i. Psalm 119:65-72 – King David’s afflictions focused him on God.
 - ii. Let your suffering remind you of Christ’s suffering and pain.
 - iii. Romans 5:2-5 – Trials can bring perseverance, character, and a hope that does not disappoint.
3. What happens to Suffering and Evil?
 - a. Recognize it is temporary. II Corinthians 4:16-18
 - b. Christ has provided a perfect future I Corinthians 2:9 // Revelation 21:4



The Question:

You might stumble over a word, a verse, a connection to another part of the Bible, or something the pastor says and this is a good time to talk about these things. With every question you ask, try and answer it yourself before bringing it to the group. The deepest and most lasting learning we do sometimes comes when we challenge ourselves to search for an answer to our own question. Stop, pray, ask, and do your best. Then turn to others for the answer or to share how you've grown. **Do you have any questions about this week's topic to bring up with the group?**



The Cross:

We should be constantly thinking about Christ when we read our Bibles and in Small Groups we should be Christ-focused. The topic of suffering points us directly toward Jesus.

1. Does human suffering matter to Jesus? Read John 11:32-37. **Question: What were Jesus's two reactions to Mary's news of Lazarus's death? Wouldn't he react the same way to our suffering?**
2. Did Jesus experience suffering and evil? Isaiah chapter 53 tells us how and why he did.
3. Because of Christ's suffering, what does he do for us? See Hebrews 2:9-18



The Application:

The arrow means two things: It points at us indicating a personal application for our lives. It also points forward indicating growth. This is perhaps the most important step and a driving force of the updated Sermon Notes. As we read the Bible and sit under solid biblical teaching our goal is to be transformed into Christ's likeness and become doers of the Word. This happens through applying what we are learning to our daily lives. The pastors at LOC are often very intentional with giving a next step or practical way to apply the weeks sermon to our lives, use one of those or come up with your own. Then identify and commit to something we sense the Spirit is leading us to do in obedience to the text or sermon. Be specific, make it something personal and that can be accomplished ourselves, writing it down in the Notes section, and sharing it with the group. **Let's start holding each other accountable!**



The Conversation:

Let's become outwardly focused in our faith. As we experience transformation we want to be sharing with those people God has placed around us. There is something from every week we can bring to a conversation. Identify a specific person you might connect with in the next week, and think about a time you could bring this particular truth up with them. It can be a believer or not, the important thing is the be sharing with someone outside LOC. Write their name down in the Notes section.

These tips and study techniques have been adapted from Marshal Segal's article "Six Question to Ask When Studying the Bible in a Group". <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/six-questions-to-ask-when-studying-the-bible-in-a-group>.

