

EXILES

MAIN POINT:

Because Christ went to the ultimate furnace for you, you can be assured that he's walking through your personal furnaces with you.

EXPLORATION:

Throughout the *Exploration* phase of this Discussion Guide, notice 3 Ways We Face Evil and Suffering: Look back to something (Christ), Look ahead to something (New Heavens and New Earth), Look into something (the Gospel).

1. Read 1 Peter 1:3-12. Notice that Peter likens the testing of our faith by saying "it is tested by fire" (v.7). Now read the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3:8-25. What does this account tell us about God's relation to us in our suffering and in experiencing evil?

(Context Clues: Notice Daniel 3:25. King Nebuchadnezzar notices someone else in the furnace, a fourth person Who was this? For a further clue read Isaiah 43:1-2.)

2. To further emphasis how Christ is with you in your suffering, discuss all the ways that Jesus displayed this through the Cross.

3. Re-read 1 Peter 1:3-5. What does Peter mention an "inheritance to imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you", new heavens and new earth, to Christians who are suffering and experiencing evil? Why is this significant in how they face evil and suffering?

(Context Clues: The "inheritance" can be a little confusing as to what's to come. Therefore, for further explanation of new heavens and new earth, Read 1 Corinthians 15:52-57 and Revelation 21-22.)

4. Re-read 1 Peter 1:10-12. Why would looking into the Gospel help us through our pain, suffering, and the evil we experience? How does the Gospel produce what is expressed in 1 Peter 1:8? (Context Clues: Notice that Peter writes that the angels "long to look" into the Gospel. They never stop looking into the Gospel of Jesus Christ because of its sheer amazement.)

APPLICATION:

1. Review the 3 ways that Christians should deal with evil and suffering. By:

- Looking back to something (Christ)
- Looking ahead to something (New Heavens and New Earth)
- Looking into something (the Gospel).

2. Maybe you're experiencing evil and suffering now. If not, you will in the future. Discuss what the following 2 statements do for your experience of evil and suffering:

"Because Christ went to the ultimate furnace for you, you can be assured that he's walking through your personal furnaces with you."

"The thought that you are His living hope will make Him your living hope."

3. Pray for each member of your small group or family and any trials they are facing or will face.