

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions
Week of April 29th, 2018

Ice Breaker: The Opportunity of Struggle

Clay talked about how our struggles can make us feel defeated. The grief and regret we feel can keep us in a state of defeat. But we are struggling; not defeated. Knowing that you are not defeated brings hope, and that hope can only be found through Christ and His power. **What hinders us from experiencing hope in the midst of our struggles? What helps us in experiencing hope in the midst of our struggles?**

Read: 1 Corinthians 9:25-27

²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Last week, Mark mentioned this Scripture and encouraged us to train and discipline our bodies to fight against our common struggle, our sin. It's hard to run this race with a 100lb weight of your past clinging to your leg. Clay encouraged us to:

- 1. Face the truth**
- 2. Accept the truth**
- 3. Accept grace, not guilt**

Break down the practicality side of these three steps. What does it look like to face the truth, to face your past instead of hiding it under a rug? What does it look like to accept it as what it is? How do we do that? And finally, how do we accept God's grace rather than accepting guilt? What would your life look like from here on out if you accept guilt? What would it look like if you accepted grace?

Clay mentioned how God does some of His best work in seasons of struggle. Look at the life of Moses...

Read: Exodus 2:11-15; 3:1-5, 10-12; 4:10-13

¹¹ One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. ¹² He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. ¹³ When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, "Why do you strike your companion?" ¹⁴ He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known." ¹⁵ When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

¹ Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, "I will turn aside to

see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.”⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”⁵ Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”

¹⁰ Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”¹² He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

¹⁰ But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.”¹¹ Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.”¹³ But he said, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else.”

Moses was struggling in the midst of God wanting to use him. He murdered someone, dealt with insecurities, and was scared that his imperfections would hinder him from doing what the Lord wanted him to do. But we see in this story how God does some of His best work in seasons of struggle. **Share with your group how God has done some great work in your season of struggle. Encourage the group to open up about what God has done in the midst of their struggles.**

READ: 2 Corinthians 7:10

¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

What are the differences between Godly grief and worldly grief?

What keeps us from grieving in a godly way?

Are there any areas of your life where you are holding on to worldly grief? Talk with your group about moving from worldly grief to Godly grief.

Next Steps:

It’s so important to see our struggles as opportunities.

Write down your struggle and add an action step to help you take your struggle into opportunity. What’s the first step you are going to take to make your struggle an opportunity?

Focus on this one step this week and look to grow your opportunities throughout this series.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Be specific in asking God to help you personally face your past and accept grace, not guilt. Ask God to move you from worldly grief to Godly grief. Pray for strength to make your struggles opportunities to grow.