

"BAD TAKES"

Life Group discussion questions, week 3

KEY PASSAGES:

John 16:33 "In this world you will have trouble..."

Philippians 3:10 I want to know Christ - yes, even to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

Philippians 4:11-13 I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Acts 14:22 "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."

1 Peter 4:12-13 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Romans 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

1 Peter 5:10 The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

2 Timothy 1:2 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

Psalms 71:17-18 Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is one thing that definitely makes your life easier?
2. Now--what is something your *thought* would make your life easier, but ended up creating more headaches of difficulty instead?
3. Share an example (whether yourself or a situation you witnessed) where someone mistook a mild inconvenience for suffering or hardship.
4. Nevertheless, suffering can be subjective and experiential. Anything that rocks our world to the point where it takes everything we've got just to put one foot in front of the other & take another step--that's suffering. Ethan shared his family stories of infertility and Debbie losing her dad when she was young. Share something you've been through that really rocked your world and maybe even caused you to question God's goodness.
5. Read through just about any of the verses above talking about suffering. What do those communicate to you about our times of pain, hardship and suffering?
6. Read Philippians 4:11-13, where Paul keeps using the phrase "I have *learned*..." He is referring to experiential learning, where we develop through actively choosing contentment in situations where our circumstances are less than ideal. What is one area you could do well to practice this kind of learning?
7. Read Psalm 71:17-18. Who are some people in your life who could stand to learn some important things about the God you serve by seeing *you* learn contentment in any / every situation?