

May 4, 2003

Week Twenty-seven: "Suffering For Righteousness' Sake"

Day One: Small Group Guide

Read: Job 36:16 (p. 581)

Read: Commentary (p. 582)

Reflect: Have you ever suffered for choosing to do the right thing? Have you seen others suffer for choosing right? What effect did this have on you?

Dig: Read Job 1:6-12 (p. 552) to understand the setting of the entire book. What is Satan's role in Job's suffering?

What does verse 15 of this chapter add to your understanding of suffering and God's role in it?

According to 2 Timothy 3:12 (p. 1408) suffering might be necessary for us to prove something. What does suffering prove, according to this passage?

Apply: Ask God to help you to become cross cultural in your attitude toward suffering and welcome it as part of what it means to grow as a Christian. Now, ask him to help you to soften your heart toward a specific area of suffering that you undergo. What is he teaching you?

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Day Two: "Suffering Builds Character"

Read: Hebrews 2:9-10 (p. 1420)

Read: Commentary (p. 1422)

Reflect: Suffering can make you bitter or better. Can you remember times in your life when suffering made you bitter? How about better?

Dig: The context of these verses (9-10) is so important for understanding just what Christ learned through obedience. See if you can understand what 11-18 contributes to understanding this text.

How does Hebrews 4:14-16 complete this picture?

What is the main point of this chapter? See verses 1-3 for the answer to this question.

Apply: Conclude with an out-loud reading of the poem at the close of the commentary on page 1422. Let your heart swell with gratitude toward such a great God!!

Week Twenty-seven: "Suffering for Righteousness' Sake" **Day Three: "Suffering Draws Us Closer to God"**

Read: Isaiah 63:9 (p. 821)

Read: Commentary (p. 821)

Reflect: When has shared suffering closed the gap between you and others? Does misery love company?

Dig: Look up all the cross-references listed by the FIC Bible. What did you learn from each about how God was with his people?

Exodus 33:12-14 (p. 99)

Deut. 7:7-8 (p. 200)

Deut. 1:29-31 (p. 192)

Apply: The commentary lists three truths about suffering:

1. God is always in control of our suffering and will turn it to our good.
2. God limits the amount of our suffering so that we can bear up under it.
3. God's presence will enable us to endure through the suffering.

In prayer, place your suffering before God and trust these truths. Then thank him for his provision.

**Week Twenty-seven: "Suffering for Righteousness' Sake"
Day Four: "God's Ministry of Darkness"**

Read: Isaiah 50:10-11 (p. 807)

Read: Commentary (p. 807)

Reflect: We either run ahead of God or lag behind him. When have you run ahead when you should have waited?

Dig: Notice these other places where God instructs us to wait; what do you learn?

Isaiah 30:15-18 (p. 783)

Psalms 27:13-14 (p. 610)

The commentary references Isaiah 45:7 to help us understand that both light and darkness and even suffering are designed by God. Look this verse up and answer this question: How does this truth help us to stay put in the darkness of our soul?

Apply: Since "we should never doubt in the darkness what God has revealed in the light," what revelation of God in the light are you being called to just trust in? Ask God for the grace to walk in whatever darkness your path takes you through today.

**Week Twenty-seven: "Suffering for Righteousness' Sake"
Day Five: "God's Ministry of Rest"**

Read: Exodus 33:12-14 (p. 99)

Read: Commentary (p. 100)

Reflect: Have you ever experienced "burnout"? What was that like?

Dig: What are the two things that Moses had to know in order to follow God's leadership call? (see verses 12-13)

What lines of Psalm 23 (p. 605) fit nicely with what God said to Moses?

In what ways is the "yoke" of Jesus easy and his burden light? (see Matthew 11:28-30 (p. 1091))

Apply: How can this definition become your way of rest: "Biblical rest is neither a cessation of labor nor the abdication of responsibility. Biblical rest is living God's way by faith, empowered by His presence"?

Ask God to give you His rest today.