

Transformed: Transformation through Trials

Session Aim

The purpose of this small group session is to help us grow in our appreciation of the role trials and problems have in our spiritual transformation. We will seek to understand how God can allow trials and problems through sharing our own experiences and hearing about the experiences of others in our group.

Preparation

Read the Bible texts listed below in advance. With a concordance or Bible dictionary, make a list of other Bible verses that talk about people who were helped in their walk with God through suffering trials (for example, Joseph). What other Old Testament or New Testament personalities can you think of?

Bible Text: James 1:2 – 4; Romans 5:1 – 5; I Peter 4:12 – 19

Introduction

Someone commented that the only things we can count on are “taxes” and “death.” While we can count on those two things, there are many other things we **KNOW** we can count on. We know God loves us, we know Jesus died for us, and we know the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. We can also count on encountering various trials in our life. Jesus foretold his own trials before he experienced them (Matthew 16:21, 17:22-23, 20:17-19; John 16:33 and Phil. 2:5 – 11). Paul also experienced many trials in his ministry (2 Cor. 11:21 – 33). We should not be surprised when we encounter trials in our life (I Pet. 4:12). Since we are going to encounter various trials, what should our attitude be? In James 1:2, the Bible says we are to rejoice in our trials. How do we develop our faith to a point where we are rejoicing in our trials? This requires both a short and long perspective on our trials. A short perspective is that we live one day at a time (Matt. 6:34) and a long perspective is that we are convinced that God will work out these trials for the perseverance of our faith (James 1:2-4). In this lesson, we will have opportunity to talk about how the group can help each other deal with, endure and benefit from trials.

Welcome/Icebreakers

If you could capture a special moment from the last week which one would you frame? Why? What is one of the worst “trials” you have ever endured? How did you get through it? When did you think something would be worse than it turned out to be? To what do you attribute the reversal?

Worship

Sing songs that focus on overcoming trials and temptations. Read I Peter 4:12 - 19.

Bible Study (Read together the verses listed above)

1. Define the term trials.
2. What makes trials so difficult to endure?
3. How do you usually handle trials?
4. James 1:2 says we are to rejoice in our trials. How do we get to a point where we can rejoice in trials?
5. Describe a time when trials made you stronger.
6. How do we reconcile a loving, caring God with the presence of trials in our life?
7. What prevents us from seeking help in times of trials?
8. What trials are you encountering at this time?
9. How can we practically help each other in the midst of trials?

Application

Everyone faces trials! Share and pray for people you know who are facing trials in their life. As a group develops ways you can help these individuals, send cards, make a home visit, share a meal, etc.

Conclusion

Over the next few weeks, try to be especially aware of how you can help the other members of your small group in facing the challenges of trials.