



Sermon Discussion Guide

Sanctification: Transformed by Trouble Getting Through What You're Going Through – Part 5

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We look at the Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. Colossians 1:15 (MSG)

God's #1 purpose in your life is to help you become more like Christ. Everything in life makes more sense when you understand this purpose. Becoming a Christian does not mean we will not experience problems. While God hates evil and suffering, he can take the bad things in life and bring good out of them. Every problem has a purpose – to conform our character into one more like Christ. This process is called sanctification. Let's look at how God uses our troubles for good: to make us more Christ-like.

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

"We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son..." Romans 8:28-29 (NLT)

1. When we are in the middle of a tragedy or serious trial in our lives, it can be difficult to remember that the painful piece of your journey that God is working on is ultimately for your good. But, if you love God and are living his way, you have that assurance. Tell your group which part of this verse has the most meaning to you, and why.

"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive." Genesis 50:20 (NASB)

2. Joseph recognized that the first 40 years of his life had been meant for good, to bring about God's purpose. How do you think he endured those 40 years when he was in the middle of all that had been intended for evil? How do you think his example will apply to your life the next time you are faced with a painful circumstance or unjust accusation?

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1Thessalonians 5:18 (NIV)

3. What is the difference between giving thanks *for* circumstances and giving thanks *in* circumstances? Think of an example in your own life you would be willing to share with your group.

"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." James 1:3-4 (NASB)

4. We may not have the answer to the "why" of our circumstances, but we can be confident that God will use them in our lives to transform our character to be more like Christ. Discuss together how you might surrender the next time you are challenged by a problem in your life in light of these verses.

Diving Deeper (optional)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB)

1. To teach the fruits of the Spirit, God puts you in the exact opposite situation. For example, to teach love, he puts you around people difficult to love; to teach joy, God puts you in times of sadness; to become a man or woman of peace, you must deal with conflict. Which fruit(s) is God presently teaching you? How are you actively depending on the Holy Spirit to guide you through your troubles so you learn how to become more like Christ?
2. There are four things God uses to make you like Jesus: 1.) The Holy Spirit; 2.) His Word; 3.) Other people; and 4.) problems. Share a time when one of these helped you embrace God's plan for your life. How can these help you experience God at a deeper level in order to reflect his holiness in your life?

REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.



Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- What is your favorite type of cake? Do you like it plain or ala mode?
- As Christians when we respond to the troubles that life holds, we become more like Jesus by: 1.) remembering that God’s plan is good, 2.) rejoicing and giving thanks to God and 3.) refusing to give up.
- *Jesus: Please help us be transformed by the troubles of this life. Be so near we can sense your presence. Cradle us when we cry by reminding us your plan is good. Give a new vista, a new perspective to this life, so that we thrive in the midst of pain, knowing we can always rejoice in you and give thanks to you. Strengthen us when we feel like giving up. Help us to see our troubles as times not to flee from you, but to press into you so we can become more like you. Thank you for being an irresistible savior! Amen.*

Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.