

LESSON 3: Pain is God's Megaphone – Study Guide & Discussion Questions

Lesson Overview: Through the fires of suffering, pain, and loss, God is working in extraordinary ways to strengthen and purify our faith, drawing us into greater intimacy with Him.

Lesson Guide

- I. Pastor Tim's family's story of suffering on this broken planet.
- II. Quote from C.S. Lewis,
"God _____ to us in our pleasures, _____ to us in our conscience, but _____ in our pains: it is His _____ to rouse a deaf world."
- III. The story of Jonah
 - a. "To Jonah, God's _____ to the wicked people of Nineveh didn't make any sense at all!"
 - b. The possible "great reveal" of the story of Jonah/Nineveh:
"Is it possible that Jonah's _____ was part of what God used to prevent a _____ of the people He loved?" But Jonah didn't see that because he was focused on his own pains and discomforts.
- IV. Quote from Elisabeth Elliot, "Faith's most severe tests come not when we see _____, but when we see a stunning array of evidence that seems to prove our _____ ."
- V. God-honoring response to suffering and difficulties is to _____ .
 - a. Discipline – Hebrews 12:7 & Proverbs 3:11-12
 - b. P _____ James 1:2-4

"Trials are not just to mess with your happiness...there is a greater purpose at work. Our _____ and being complete."
 - c. P _____ I Peter 1:7
- VI. "For those who are followers of God, we need to remember that He is always _____ us, even when the trial doesn't disappear, even when our pleas for relief doesn't go the way we want..." (Romans 8:35-39)
- VII. "Knowing that our suffering and pain is _____ and _____ us makes our faith more resilient."

SURVIVOR TIP #3: Choosing to Talk Carefully

"Talk was created by God and ... should be up to God's standard and reflect his glory." Paul Trip in *War of Words*

In the midst of suffering we must make sure that they are true and reflect God's glory. Why? Because spoken words have _____ .

The 3-letter word *WHY* can be a question (to attain understanding) or an _____ .

"Job had definitely lost his sense of _____. All he could see was the incongruence, a God who had brought upon him great calamity... It made no sense."

Two different responses to a tragic death: 1) some have come through with a more resilient faith, retaining wonder and awe of God; 2) others' faith has been weakened – God has never left the courtrooms of _____ .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. C.S. Lewis' use of the megaphone metaphor emphasizes the volume of God's speaking to us at different times in our lives. In reality, do you think the actual difference is God's volume in speaking, or our attention, or both?
2. Have you ever, like Jonah, felt justified in being angry towards God? Describe.
3. How has God used pain to get your attention, or as Pastor Tim put it, "to redirect your steps or rearrange your priorities"?
4. Describe a situation where you had a "great reveal," a time when the reason that God allowed something seemingly crazy (or unjust or uncaring, etc.) was revealed, making it all suddenly make sense.
Example would be Jonah's situation, where the revival that came to the wicked Ninevites – which made no sense to Jonah – was perhaps how God was preventing the genocide of His people in the years to come.
5. Have you ever felt God blessed you because you embraced growth during a dark or difficult time? Please describe.
6. In the midst of suffering and testing, has the knowledge that this pain is working to purify and strengthen you really helped you embrace growth? To become better, not bitter? Describe.

LESSON 3 Study Guide [ANSWERS]

- I. Pastor Tim's family's story of suffering on this broken planet.
- II. Quote from C.S. Lewis,
"God **WHISPERS** to us in our pleasures, **SPEAKS** to us in our conscience, but **SHOUTS** in our pains: it is His **MEGAPHONE** to rouse a deaf world."
- III. The story of Jonah
 - a. "To Jonah, God's **KINDNESS** to the wicked people of Nineveh didn't make any sense at all!"
 - b. The possible "great reveal" of the story of Jonah/Nineveh:
"Is it possible that Jonah's **SUFFERING** was part of what God used to prevent a **GENOCIDE** of the people He loved?" But Jonah didn't see that because he was focused on his own pains and discomforts.
- IV. Quote from Elisabeth Elliott, "Faith's most severe tests come not when we see **NOTHING** but when we see a stunning array of evidence that seems to prove our **FAITH VAIN** .
- V. God-honoring response to suffering and difficulties is to **EMBRACE GROWTH** .
 - a. Discipline – Hebrews 12:7 & Proverbs 3:11-12
 - b. **PERSEVERENCE** James 1:2-4

"Trials are not just to mess with your happiness...there is a greater purpose at work. Our **MATURITY** and being complete."
 - c. **PURITY** | Peter 1:7
- VI. "For those who are followers of God, we need to remember that He is always **FOR** us, even when the trial doesn't disappear, even when our pleas for relief doesn't go the way we want..." (Romans 8:35-39)
- VII. "Knowing that our suffering and pain is **PURIFYING** and **MATURING** us makes our faith more resilient."

SURVIVOR TIP #3: Choosing to Talk Carefully

"Talk was created by God and ... should be up to God's standard and reflect his glory." Paul Trip in *War of Words*

In the midst of suffering we must make sure that they are true and reflect God's glory. Why? Because spoken words have **POWER** .

The 3-letter word *WHY* can be a question (to attain understanding) or an **ACCUSATION** .

"Job had definitely lost his sense of **WONDER**. All he could see was the incongruence, a God who had brought upon him great calamity... It made no sense."

Two different responses to a tragic death: 1) some have come through with a more resilient faith, retaining wonder and awe of God; 2) others' faith has been weakened – God has never left the courtrooms of **THEIR HEARTS**.