

When life gets HARD!

Five ways God brings **meaning**

Session 2: When Life Gets Hard, God Brings Personal Strength

February 11-17, 2018

Hangout (30 Minutes)

1. Ice Breakers: Each person picks one to answer
 - What is one of the first things that you thought you were good at?
 - In a job interview, how would you answer this question, “What are your strengths?”
2. Briefly remind people of the Life Group Agreement and plans for your next meeting.
3. Use the book “The Complete Book of Questions” and have one person pick a number. The higher the number the deeper the question. Remember, everyone has the right to pass on any question if they aren’t ready to answer.

Watch the Video (24 Minutes)

Watch the video if necessary. If everyone viewed the sermon before the meeting, add this time to your discussion.

Discuss (30 Minutes)

It’s okay if you don’t get to every question.

1. What was your response when this question was asked during the sermon, “Did you grow stronger during the best times or the hard times?”
2. Which of these quotes do you like the most?

“Let me fall if I must fall. The one I become will catch me.” – Baal Shem Tov, Jewish mystical rabbi and founder of Hasidic Judaism (1698-1760)

“In the depths of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.” – Albert Camus, French philosopher (1913-1960)

“When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.” – Viktor Frankl, psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor (1905-1997)

“I am more vulnerable than I thought, but much stronger than I ever imagined.” – Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun, Helping Bereaved Parents: A Clinician’s Guide, 2003.

3. The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:7b-10

- Share anything that bothers you or questions you have from these verses.
- What do you agree with in these verses?
- What do you most relate to in these verses?

4. At the Last Supper, Jesus said to his disciples,

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

- How do you understand Jesus’ words, “I have overcome the world.”?
- Explain how this truth about Jesus gives you strength to face trials in this life.

5. What did you find helpful in Pastor Steve’s illustration coming to a fork in the road on the journey of grief?

6. For you, what is the most helpful take-away from this week?

7. Who is someone that you know would be helped to hear this?

Summary

When life gets hard, God gives us personal strength at a level we did not think possible. This personal strength does not come from our own ability to muster in up inside ourselves. This personal strength comes from the truth that Jesus has overcome the troubles of this world. This brings meaning to our loss and suffering and gives us peace.

Next week we will learn that **When Life Gets Hard God Brings Greater Appreciation.**

Pray (5 Minutes)

Our Lord God says, “Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.” Isaiah 41:10

Think of something you need God’s strength to face in the days ahead. When we come to this blank in the prayer, silently name this need before God.

Leader: Let us pray together:

Group: Gracious Lord, thank you for bringing meaning when my life gets hard. Give me strength to meet the days ahead, especially as I face (silently name where you need strength.)

Leader: We continue praying,

Group: Help me not to be afraid, knowing that you are with me. Help me to not be discouraged, for you are my God. I trust that you will strengthen and help me. I know that you will hold me up with your victorious right hand. All glory be to you, my Savior. Amen.