

When life gets HARD!

Five ways God brings **meaning**

Session 5: When Life Gets Hard, God Brings More Meaning in Life

March 4 - 10, 2018

Hangout (25 Minutes)

1. Use the book The Complete Book of Questions and have one person pick a number from 401-500. Remember, everyone has the right to pass on any question.
2. The leader informs the group whether you will continue meeting after this study. Discuss if necessary (Leaders: reference the “What’s Next” document you received from your coach.) Make plans for a social time together after March 15.

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. We encourage groups to at least answer questions 1, 2, and 4.

1. From John 5:16-30, Pastor Steve explained the greater meaning in life Jesus appeared to gain as a result of being persecuted. What do you find most encouraging to your faith in this passage, and why? *If you wish, you can include John 5:31-47 in your discussion.*

Because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him.

¹⁷ In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” ¹⁸ For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

¹⁹ Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. ²¹ For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. ²² Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

²⁴ “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. ²⁵ Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

²⁶ For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. ²⁷ And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

²⁸ “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned. ³⁰ By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. John 5:16-30

2. If you have gone through a hard time in your life, answer this question: As you were going through that hard time, and as you began to recover, did you gain greater clarity about what matters most in life?

If NO ...

- How would you describe where you are at along the path of recovery?
- What step(s) toward recovery are you hoping to take in the near future?

If YES ...

- Explain the greater clarity you gained.
- How did this change your understanding of the “meaning of life”?
- Share anything else that you gained from this hard time in your life.
- Have you come to the point where you are thankful that you went through the hard time because of the greater meaning of life you gained?
- Would you trade the greater meaning gained for having not experienced the hard time? Why or why not?

3. Have someone read Romans 5:15:

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

- What jumps out at you in this passage?
- There is a progression described in verses 3-5. How do you see this progression working in life?
- In your own words, describe the basis for the progression taught in verses 1-2.

4. What is a next step you are taking away from this week?

Summary of Sermon

Jesus appears to have gained more meaning in life when he faced persecution. In a similar way, when life gets hard for us, God brings more meaning into our lives. God brings meaning and purpose to our loss and suffering by giving us greater clarity of what matters most in life. We gain a grandeur vision for our lives, that of-making an eternal difference in the lives of others. The result is that we take steps forward on the path to recovery, build holy resilience, take back joy, and face the future with confident hope. We might end up being thankful for the hard times.

Next week we will learn that ***When Life Gets Hard God Brings New Possibilities***

Pray (10 Minutes)

Remember that anyone can pass. Go around the circle and share one next step you are hoping to take in your journey of faith. Listen carefully to the person to your left, taking notes if it will help you remember. After everyone has shared, go around the circle again to pray for those next steps. Have the person to everyone’s right briefly pray for the next step that person hopes to take. This could be a simple, one-sentence prayer like: "Dear Lord, please help _____ to _____." The leader begins and ends the prayer.