

God in the Everyday - Suffering

Rom 8:18-28

1. As God searches your heart, what are some of the types of suffering he would find touch you most? (Rom 8:27a)
2. What are some of the questions and attitudes to suffering that you have encountered in the world today?

Reality of Suffering

The Bible doesn't give us all the answers to suffering but is honest about its reality.

3. How widespread is suffering? (Rom 8:22-23)
4. What are some of the causes of suffering, both preventable and unpreventable?

Not alone in suffering

5. In what way can God share in our experience of suffering? (2 Cor 1:3-5; Heb 4:15-16; 5:7-9)
6. How does God help us in suffering? (Rom 8:26-7)

Hope in Suffering

7. What is the hope we have in suffering? (Rom 8:18-21; Rev 21:3-4; 2 Cor 4:17)

Growth in Suffering

8. Suffering is not good but can bring good in our lives. How can suffering become something good in our lives? (Rom 8:28; Heb 12: 7-11; I Pet 1:6-7; James 1: 2-5, 12)

Pray Together

- Give thanks and praise to God our Father who loves us and understands us deeply, to Jesus who has suffered on our behalf and for the Holy Spirit who helps us bring our deep grief and pain to God.
- Pray for each other, bringing to God the trials and sufferings you may be experiencing. Pray for openness to God's work of growth in our lives.

God in the Everyday – Work

Gen 2:4-15

What does the term 'work' cover in your life? How do you feel about it?

The God of Work

1. In Gen 2:2 God is seen as a worker. What are some of the images we find in the Bible of God as a worker? (Gen 2:8, Ps 23, Jer 18:6, Matt 8:16, Ps 143:10, Isa 5:1-7, Mal 3:2-3 etc.)
2. Does God still work today (John 5:17)?

Work and Us

3. Why is work good for us? (Gen 1:26-27; 2: 15) What aspects of work do you find good, bringing satisfaction?
4. In Gen 2:15 the Hebrew word *abad* (work) also means 'service to God' and *shamar* (take care) also means 'keeping his commandments'. What does this imply about the nature of good work?
5. Notice the command to work and care for creation comes before sin entered the world. How does sin impact work? (Gen 3:17-19)
6. Paul Stevens suggests that the place for spiritual growth is work, not worship or Bible Reading/prayer. Do you agree? How can work or the work place be a place of spiritual growth?

Work and Others

7. What are some of the temptations to sin in work that result in exploitation of others?
8. Repentance should result in concrete action. What are some examples of repentance acted out in work? (Luke 3:13-14; Eph 4:28) What might repentance enacted look like in a work situation today?

Work and God

9. What is the challenge Col 3:22-24 gives us in relation to work? What are some practical steps you might take to remind yourself to perform each task ahead of as if working for God?

Pray Together

- Give thanks for work and in particular the work God has given you.
- Pray for each other at work. Pray for the particular challenges each one faces and areas of spiritual growth.

Going Deeper

Watch Paul Stevens on the *Spirituality of Work* (35 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmWRT0GR2Kw>

God in the Everyday – Disagreeing Well

Romans 14

1. Think of some of the disputes between Christians recently and over the centuries. Which of these are indisputable (issues that are essential to the Christian faith) and which are disputable (Christians may disagree but the issue is not central to the faith)? How have disputes impacted individual Christians and the wider church?
2. For some issues it may be more difficult to determine whether they are indisputable or not. What criteria might help to determine whether a matter disputable or not?
3. What is God's perspective when it comes to the issue the Roman church faced and disputable matters in general? V3-4 (Note: this was not a trivial matter for the Roman Christians even though it was disputable. Some Roman Christians believed it was sinful to eat meat that did not conform to Jewish dietary laws.)
4. What are some of the wrong attitudes we are tempted to in disagreements? V1-4, 10-12 (See also Prov 13:10, Prov 17:19, James 4:1)
5. When it comes to a disagreement what is our personal responsibility? V5-9, 22-23 How might this help us evaluate our own position and whether we need to change our mind and attitudes?
6. Rom 14:19 urges us to do what leads to peace and mutual edification. Practically, how can that be achieved? V13-15 (See also Rom 12:10) How might that apply to some of the disagreements you identified in Question 1?
7. Can the principles for handling a disputable issue as found in Rom 14 be applied to indisputable issues?
8. Can the principles for handling a disagreement found in this passage be applied to disagreements with non-Christians?

Pray Together

Pray for each other in disagreements you face, for godly attitudes in arguments and humility to listen and learn from others. Pray for discernment to know when a disagreement is disputable or not.

Going Further

Check out the Podcast *With All Due Respect* episode on how to have an argument <https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/how-to-have-an-argument/id1437346405?i=1000537911393>

God in the Mundane

Col 1:9-14

Think about your day. Name some of the mundane routines of your day, the ones you hardly think about. What are some routines that lead us to God, some that are neutral and some that are destructive when it comes to our relationship with God.

1. Jesus lived the life of an ordinary human being. Notice some of the mundane bits of his life. (See Matt 8:24; Matt 9:1; Matt 12:1; Mk 1:35; Jn 21: 9, 12). God is interested in the mundane of our lives.
2. What does it mean to live a life worthy of God? (Col 1:10-12)
3. Jesus summed up the commandments God gave to live well (See Mk 12:29-31). What criteria might we use to evaluate our routines/habits?
4. *It is our actions, our routines that both shape and reflect what we actually love, not what we profess to love.* Do you agree or disagree?
5. Paul refers to the struggle we have living a life pleasing to God in Rom 7:15-25. Why does the gospel, the good news of Jesus, give us hope when it comes to changing habits that lead us away from loving God?
6. The Bible tells us that salvation comes from Jesus (Acts 4:12) and yet we are to work out our salvation (Phil 2:12-13). How does this apply to living a life pleasing to God in the mundane bits of our day?
7. What do you know from science about changing habits? What are some practical steps to change? Take a look at Col 1:9-14 for clues to how to take those practical steps as Christians cooperating with God's work in our lives.

Pray Together

Share one way you would like to change in the mundane routines of your life, in order to live a life more pleasing to God. Support each other in prayer along the lines of Col 1:9-14.

Further Challenge:

To reflect more on how our routines reveal our deep loves and what that means for our faith watch James K.A. Smith <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xVV4lrOBXI>