

WHEN GOD
DOESN'T
MAKE SENSE

3. SURRENDER

ICEBREAKER



If this is a new group or there are new people, please take a moment to **introduce yourselves.**

To start off your small group, briefly share your response to the following question:

What game are you the best at? And what game are you so bad at you just want to give up and surrender as soon as you start?

Share with your group.

WHAT TO EXPECT



Let's get a big picture of what we'll be learning today...

For the past two weeks in our small group discussions, we've talked about devastating circumstances that left us in a place of questioning "When God Doesn't Make Sense." We talked about how to deal with shock from situations that shake us to our very core. We looked at sorrow and struggle through the lens of healthy grieving. But, how do we let go of the pain that we have to go through in life? How do we get past the pain so that we can move forward from getting stuck with the present discomfort of shock, sorrow and struggle? This week we will look at how surrendering to God can lead us to a path of peace.

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Tip: BE COMFORTABLE WITH SILENCE. Uncomfortable silences are bound to happen. It's okay! A long pause during a group discussion can be powerful. A *pause* gives space for quieter people to break into the conversation; *silence* allows people to figure out exactly what they would like to say.

Tip: AVOID TALKING or TEACHING TOO MUCH. Small groups are designed for everyone to share and grow together. Encourage the quieter people to talk and the talkers to talk less.

ONLINE Tip: MUTING OF MICROPHONES. Get familiar with the Zoom features on your electronic device. It is helpful for everyone to know where the mute button is located. Ask the attendees to self-mute to avoid outside noise when someone else is talking & sharing. Doing this will help with the flow of your SG discussion time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.) We all feel pain in our lives. No matter how well things are going right now, chances are something will happen that brings you heartbreak and hurt. It's not a question of how to avoid pain. It's really about learning how to let go of it.

Surrender is the pathway to peace. We can do a lot of things with our pain, but nothing brings us true peace of mind like giving it over to God. That doesn't mean it's all erased but it does mean that we can have purpose through our pain.

That takes being humble. Instead of demanding our own way, we surrender to God's way. And in doing so, He gives us peace. Read the following passage:

Humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time He will lift you up in honor. Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you.

(1 Peter 5:6-7 - NLT)

What are some of our personal barriers to surrendering pain to God? (Ex. Some answers may be a need for control, fear of the unknown, past difficulties, don't feel it's fair, or don't know how.)

2.) There are three things that pain can do to us. The first, and most harmful, is that we allow it to destroy us. We all know people who have used their pain as a reason to push others away, engage in self-destructive behavior, or even hurt others.

When we see others who let their pain destroy them, we need to show extra mercy and grace. By understanding what they are going through we can better empathize with their sorrow and struggle.

When it comes to our own pain, we should take the initiative to keep from allowing pain to destroy us. That can be very difficult, because pain makes us feel so out of control. When we accept that we cannot change our circumstances we can surrender our pain to God and trust He has the best for us.

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair.

(2 Corinthians 4:8 - NLT)

Paul faced incredible pain in his life. Why do you think he was able to surrender his pain to God instead of allowing it to destroy him? What characteristics do you see in him, or someone you may know, that create resilience and determination?

3.) Another way we deal with pain is to allow it to define us. It doesn't kill us, but we could live in a way that every decision is based on that past pain. We may stop doing the things that we once loved. Or we may start acting in ways that aren't helpful because we can only think of the pain.

In the Old Testament, David suffered incredible loss when his son died. While he was still sick, David did everything he could to keep him alive. But once his son was gone, he changed. Take a look.

"I fasted and wept while the child was alive, for I said, 'Perhaps the Lord will be gracious to me and let the child live.' But why should I fast when he is dead? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him one day, but he cannot return to me."

(2 Samuel 12:22-23 - NLT)

Notice that he was able to keep the pain from defining the rest of his life because he knew he would see his son again one day. He remembers that this pain is not the end.

Have you ever felt so bad because of your pain that you thought your life was over? What strength from the Lord helped you rebound from that experience?

4.) Finally, we can allow our pain to develop us. Worship has a way of redirecting our perspectives about our pain. Read the following passage:

When I tried to understand all this it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.

(Psalm 73:16-17 - NIV)

When we worship, we realize that God loves us and wants the best for us. So we begin to take care of ourselves. We also see how He loves others, and we want to join Him in that, so we take care of others as well.

Have you ever used a painful experience to become more productive or find a purpose? Share your story, or a story of someone you know, with the group. Some examples may be comforting a friend going through a divorce after you experienced the same or starting your own business after a layoff.

WHAT WILL YOU DO?



Surrender is a choice. It's our choice. We don't get to choose pain, but we do get to choose how we respond to it.

This week, will you decide to allow your past pains to develop you rather than define or destroy you?

CLOSE IN PRAYER



Take a few minutes to close your time together with prayer and to pray for each other's prayer requests. Below is a sample prayer to read if you choose to. You can also choose to write down each other's prayer requests to remember throughout the week.

Sample Prayer:

"God, we know that You love us and care for us. Even in our time of need and pain, You are there. Help us redirect our pain as a way to develop us into the person you want us to be. Show us a purpose we can fulfill in this difficult time. And send someone into our path that we can minister to. In Jesus' name we pray, amen."

Group Prayer Requests:

Name

Request

DAILY DEVOTIONS: DAY 1

SCRIPTURE...

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in Him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Romans 15:13 - NLT)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

DAILY DEVOTIONS: DAY 2

SCRIPTURE...

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you His peace at all times and in every situation. The Lord be with you all.

(2 Thessalonians 3:16 - NLT)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 4:6-7 - NLT)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, put your hope in the Lord—now and always.

(Psalm 131 - NLT)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

*"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."
(Jeremiah 29:11 - NLT)*

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...
