

# EVER WONDER WHY?

*ANSWERS TO SOME OF LIFE'S TOUGHEST QUESTIONS*

## TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **ENCOURAGE GROWTH.** Genuine doubt often leads to deeper faith. You are not there to address, "fix" or change the doubts of others. Share your perspective then encourage doubters to continue to pray for answers and to draw closer to God through the trial. Try not to speak in judgement and seek reconciliation/forgiveness for any resentment created through the discussion.

## Why Did God Let It Happen?

### When Life Hurts

#### ICEBREAKER

What's the most meaningful way someone has encouraged you during a difficult time? How did their support make a difference in your life?

#### INTRODUCTION

Have you ever noticed how some of the deepest conversations we have with God start with the word "why"? The good news is God can handle our honest questions. We may even go through situations that seem to have no purpose or hope. Here's the beautiful truth: God doesn't waste a single tear, and every challenge you face today is shaping a testimony that will bring hope to someone else tomorrow.

## READ |

Contrary to popular belief, the Bible doesn't say "God won't give you more than you can handle." Instead, Scripture promises that God provides strength and a way through our challenges. He doesn't expect us to be spiritual superheroes, but invites us to lean on His power when our own strength fails. God's promise isn't that the path will be easy, but that He'll walk it with us and provide exactly what we need.

*"The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, **He will show you a way out** so that you can endure." -1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)*

**When have you experienced God's strength in your weakness? How did that change your perspective on suffering?**

## READ |

Ever notice how suffering can make us feel isolated? Here's a powerful truth: *Jesus didn't just suffer for us - He suffers with us.* God understands exactly what we're going through.

*He was despised and rejected— a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief.  
We turned our backs on him and looked the other way.  
He was despised, and we did not care. -Isaiah 53:3 (NLT)*

The Creator of the universe chose to experience human heartache, loneliness, and grief firsthand. It's like having a friend who doesn't just say "I'm sorry you're hurting" from a distance, but sits with you in the dark until the light returns. And the most amazing part - He continues to be right there with us in every tear, every disappointment, and every moment when we feel like no one else understands.

**What has helped you feel God's presence during your loneliest moments? How can we better support each other when a friend or someone in our small group is hurting?**

## READ |

Sometimes the greatest ministry comes from our deepest hurts. In the Book of Genesis, Joseph told his brothers...

*You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. -Genesis 50:20 (NLT)*

But in one day, everything changed - God took Joseph from prisoner to second-in-command of Egypt! Every hard step prepared him for this role. God had a purpose for every tear and moment of confusion that would bring hope to countless others. He specializes in turning our pain into purpose. When we let God redeem our pain to help others, it gives our suffering new meaning.

Your pain isn't just part of your story - it might be the chapter that helps write someone else's victory.

**How has God used a painful experience in your life to bless someone else?  
How does seeing God work through your suffering change your perspective on it?**

## **READ |**

*"It was hard for me to understand all this! Then I went to your temple, and there I understood what will happen to my enemies." Psalm 73:17 (CEV)*

The Psalmist discovered peace in God's presence. Sometimes our breakthrough comes not from finding answers, but from finding God's presence. Just as the Psalmist's perspective shifted in God's sanctuary - from questioning why the wicked prosper to trusting God's plan - our outlook changes when we prioritize time with God and His people.

Think of it like walking into a dark room and finding the light switch - suddenly everything that felt overwhelming in the dark looks manageable in the light. When we make time to sit in God's presence, whether that's in a church building, on the beach with our Bible, or with our small group, we're giving God space to gently redirect our focus from our problems to His promises.

And remember, your sanctuary isn't just a place - it's anywhere you pause long enough to feel God's presence and seek out His purposes.

**What's your "sanctuary" - those places or practices that help you feel close to God when life gets tough? How has your small group become part of your healing journey?**

**Discuss with your Small Group if you will continue to meet for the series following “Ever Wonder Why?”**

## **WHAT WILL YOU DO?**

Let's commit to finding God's purpose, even in our times of pain:

- Learn to lean on your small group (and other Christian brothers and sisters) to be your strength when you're feeling weak
- Find someone who's struggling with what you've overcome and share your story of hope with them
- Choose three trusted friends as your "hope team" for support and commit to being there for them too

## **CLOSE IN PRAYER:**

Heavenly Father, thank You for being bigger than our doubts and closer than our fears. When life doesn't make sense, help us remember that You're writing a story bigger than what we can see right now. Give us courage to share our hurts with others, wisdom to support those who are struggling, and faith to believe that You can turn our deepest pain into our greatest purpose. Thank You for walking with us through every valley and celebrating with us on every mountaintop. In Jesus' name, amen.



## Make Time to be in God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S** - Scripture
- O** - Observation
- A** - Application
- P** - Prayer

### Here's an example:

**S:** *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*  
--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

**O:** Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

**A:** Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

**P:** Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

## SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

### **Day 1:**

***The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.***

**--Psalm 34:18 (NLT)**

### **Day 2:**

***And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*** --Romans 8:28 (NIV)

### **Day 3:**

***Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.*** --James 5:16 (NLT)

### **Day 4:**

***He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.***  
--2 Corinthians 1:4 (NLT)

### **Day 5:**

***This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.***  
--Joshua 1:9 (NLT)