



## When Life Hurts... WEEK 4 DISCUSSION GUIDE

### OVERVIEW

In this message of the series entitled, *Out of Darkness - A Study in the Book of 1 Peter*, we will explore the practical ways to respond when we are hurting and why it is important for our spiritual growth.

### DISCUSSION

In **1 Peter 3**, Peter wrote to the Believers who were suffering from persecution. Life was painful for them. In this life, there is no shortage of personal hardship, whether it's sickness, broken relationships, job related issues, etc. **This is how pain progresses: Pain & Fear → Embarrassment & Shame → Isolation.** Pain is part of this life on Earth, and when we are hurting, we tend to isolate. We do these things to protect ourselves from further hurt, but instead it drives us deeper into the hole of isolation. With the Lord's help, we can not only get through these difficult times but overcome these hardships.

- Why does pain and fear often lead to shame?
- What's the difference between guilt and shame?
- When faced with hardship, especially that which is outside your control, do you tend to isolate?
- The Bible has many examples of overcoming trials and their pain bringing glory to God. Which examples inspire you and why?

### How To Respond When Life Hurts:

1. Stay relationally connected.

In **1 Peter 3:8-12**, Peter starts with a strong encouragement, ***Be of one mind.*** That speaks of staying in relationship, unified with one another. It is important for Christians to not allow our emotional walls to go up and fight to stay unified. It's easy to become individualistic and think we can go solo through life, but the enemy's goal is to separate us and keep us isolated. ***Ecclesiastes 4:9-10*** says, ***Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, For he has no one to help him up.*** As the Body of Christ, we need to remember the importance of unity. Where we are weak, others can be strong.

- What is the importance of staying connected during hardships?
- Share a time when you chose to stay unified instead of isolate during a difficult time.

In **verse 8**, Peter says to live ***...having compassion for one another...*** When people are going through pain, we should extend compassion and show them empathy. Compassion is suffering with someone. Empathy is going a step further and understanding where they are coming from. There's healing power in our relationships when we show compassion and empathy. We should also have humility to admit when we need those things ourselves during our hardships.

- Why are both compassion and empathy important in relationships?

Peter in verse 8 and 9 continues, ***...Love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; Not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.*** It's easy to lash out when others hurt us, but Peter is saying to

respond in love, even when others treat us poorly. Jesus says in **Matthew 5:44** that we should bless others—even when they hurt and wound us. We are called to respond in the opposite spirit.

- In Matthew 5:44, Jesus tells us to love our enemies. How can we continue to love like Jesus when we encounter someone who's been hurtful in the past?

2. Live confidently.

**Verse 14-15** says, ***But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed...always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you...*** One of the keys to enduring suffering is understanding how our own suffering, our own story, can be used to inspire others. We should live and walk in confidence with what Christ has done in our lives, and not live dwelling on the guilt and shame of our past.

**Revelation 12:11: And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony...** We overcome the enemy's onslaughts when life hurts through the power of Jesus' death and resurrection...and the word of our testimony! Your story can change others' perspectives that ultimately could change the course of their lives. Your testimony is a wonderful gift that should be shared! We share it by telling others: 1) Your life before Jesus. 2) How you met Jesus. 3) How your life has been changed by Jesus. It's simple!

- Have you ever shared your story with someone? What was the outcome?
- What would you say to someone who thinks their testimony isn't worth sharing?

3. Embrace Jesus' suffering and resurrection.

Verses **17-18** say: ***For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God,*** Peter is saying it's better to experience pain for going down the right road, than to choose to go down the wrong road. We are not the first ones to suffer. Jesus endured the ultimate suffering by giving His life on the cross. Not for what He did—He was just and righteous, but for what we did. We are the unjust. Jesus is the consummate example of suffering AND resurrected living.

But we don't just embrace Jesus' suffering, we also embrace His resurrection. **Verse 18** says: ***...being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.*** We are made alive by the Spirit by the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus didn't suffer for the sake of suffering. He went *through* the suffering to the resurrection. In **Romans 8:11**, we learn that the same Spirit, the same power that exploded that day in the grave in Jerusalem—that conquered the enemy, hell, death, and the grave—is in us as Believers. We have full access to His strength, His wisdom, and His power.

- What makes it difficult to embrace suffering, even when we know the outcome?
- How can we continue to be reminded and filled with the Holy Spirit? How can we rely on God's power and strength instead of our own?

## LIFE CHALLENGE

We learned today how we can practically respond when we are hurting. But God can use our pain for a purpose! This week, share your story with someone who needs to hear it. By sharing your testimony, you can show compassion and empathy to others, while also inspiring them to keep moving forward and overcome!

## PRAYER REQUESTS & CLOSE IN PRAYER