



Keep Loving In The Hard Times

WEEK 2 DISCUSSION GUIDE

OVERVIEW

In this series entitled *How To Live Through A Bad Day*, we will hear Jesus' words and learn how to keep loving in the hard times.

DISCUSSION

- What does a good day look like for you?
- Did you have a bad day this week? If so, how were you able to turn it into a good day?

John 19:25-27: *Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple (John) whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.* Jesus' words here show us the heart of God – His tenderness, love, care and concern for us in our pain. Looking at these words from when Jesus was on the cross, we'll answer the question:

How do I love when life hurts?

1. I focus on caring for my family.

This is what Jesus is doing in this second cry from the cross. When life hurts – He's caring for His own family. Love is something you do. It's not just something you say. It is a choice. It is an action. Think about that classic passage on love, **1 Corinthians 13**. Verses 4-5 say: ***Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged.*** In the middle of all Jesus' pain – He's hanging on the cross dying – Jesus does two things for His mother. These are the same two things we can do for our families if we want to love like Jesus. First, we learn...

A. Love pays attention.

Jesus paid attention to His grieving mother who was standing there at the foot of the cross. He honored His mother first by simply paying attention. Not just paying attention to His own pain but looking out and seeing her pain and grief.

- Is it your natural tendency to pay attention to your family's needs when you're having a bad day? If not, how can you grow in this area?

B. Love provides for needs.

Jesus knew that Mary was older, poor, a widow, and needed to be cared for. In the middle of His pain, He invited Mary and John into a mother-son relationship. He knew that by putting

them together, He was creating a mutually beneficial relationship. Better than giving her things, He gives her the greatest thing – care. Godly love starts within our own family. Taking care of our family's needs is where love begins.

- Who is someone in your family that needs more attention and care?
- How can we be better listeners and care for our family's needs?

2. I treat believers as my family.

The Scriptures call us to be committed to Believers as members of our own family. **Romans 12:10** says: ***Be devoted to each other like a loving family. Excel in showing respect for each other.*** As Jesus is taking care of his mother in His final dying minutes, He entrusts her not to the care of His natural family, but to a fellow believer, His spiritual family. His relationship with John was stronger than even His natural family relationships.

When we don't have strong relationships with our natural family, that's where spiritual family comes in. Just like with our physical family, we are to give emotional support to our spiritual family. **Galatians 6:2** encourages us to: ***Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.***

- How does the relationship between Jesus and John in this passage teach us about the importance of community and spiritual family?
- Do you have a mentor or peers who are strong in their faith that you can go to when times get hard? If so, why is that relationship important to you? If not, how can you develop a relationship like that?

3. I embrace other's pain – even when I'm in pain.

Even when we're hurting, we can always look for opportunities to make a difference and care for someone else. We shouldn't just help people when things are going good in our lives; we should take the opportunities God gives us to help someone else, regardless of our circumstances. This is one of the best ways to walk out of our own pain. Not by wallowing in it but by looking around to help somebody else.

In our time of need, we should give out. We will reap what we sow, so let's sow love! If we are in a rough spot and start sowing seeds of anger, fear, or bitterness – we will reap that. We should sow love, for our own benefit and others'.

- Share a time when someone showed you love and support during a difficult period in your life. How did their actions impact you?
- In what ways can we support and care for those around us who are going through challenging circumstances, just as Jesus cared for his mother and John?
- Who is someone you can help this week?

LIFE CHALLENGE

Think about the three ways to love when life hurts—caring for family, treating believers as family, and embracing others' pain even when we're in pain. Think about which area you need to grow in the most, and make an effort to grow in that area this week.

PRAY TOGETHER