



the 3:10 discipleship course
to know the person, the power & the passion of Jesus Christ

03

SHARING CHRIST'S COMPASSION

Questions for Group Discussion

Week 1:

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL & SUFFERING

- Q1 What are the key ideas of a postmodern, scientific worldview today? See [The Problem of Evil](#)
In what ways do they pose a challenge for Biblical Christianity?
- Q2 Do you believe (in line with Darwinian evolution) that man is merely another animal (*the hairless ape*), that there are no moral absolutes of good and evil (*moral relativism*) and that science has the answers to everything (*scientific rationalism*)? How would you answer someone who said that it proves God is dead.
- Q3 Theologian Peter Kreeft has said there are two main challenges to Christian faith -
(a) The apparent ability of science to explain everything in natural terms.
(b) The problem of evil and suffering in the world.
In what ways are these a challenge to our faith as Christians?
- Q4 What are the origins of evil and suffering according to the Bible? See [The Origins of Evil](#)
What evidence can you see of this in the world today?
- Q5 The classic formation of the problem of evil states:
If God is all good, how does he allow evil to exist?
If God is all powerful, why doesn't he do something about it?
Why might this be a false kind of reasoning?
- Q6 How has God answered the challenge of evil and suffering? See [God's Answer To Evil](#)



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Week 2: GOD'S ANSWER TO EVIL: The Cross of Christ

- Q1 The Bible attributes evil and suffering to three effects of The Fall of mankind. What were they? See [The Fall of Man](#)
- Q2 In 1 JOHN 3:5 and 8 and LUKE 4:18-19 are a mission statement of Jesus' mission on earth. What was that?
- Q3 At the Cross Jesus reversed all three consequences of Adam and Eve' disobedience. In what way? See [The Cross of Christ reverses The Fall of Man](#)
- Q4 How are the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus Christ the answer to the problem of evil? See [God's Answer To Evil](#)
- Q5 Although Jesus' death and resurrection have demonstrated God's answer to the problem of evil, Christians are faced with the reality of evil and suffering in the world. Why is this so? See [Living In A Fallen World](#)
What is Christ's commission to his disciples in the light of this?



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Week 3: SPIRITUAL WARFARE AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL: Weapons & Tactics

- Q1 The Bible mentions three enemies. What are they? See [Know Your Enemy](#)
- Q2 Read **MATTHEW 4:1-11** The Temptations of Jesus in the Desert and look at [Jesus' Victory](#)
What were the three challenges satan used to test Jesus' obedience to God?
How did Jesus respond to the challenge?
Why was his victory so important?
- Q3 Define and describe *the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life*.
Which area(s) of temptation to disobey God do you find most challenging for you personally?
- Q4 What particular aspects of the postmodern world are a challenge for us as Christians in terms of the flesh, the world and the devil?
Why are so many Christian ministries destroyed by a failure to wage effective warfare at the personal level?
- Q5 How can we wage effective warfare against the enemy in our personal lives?



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Questions for Group Discussion

Week 4: SPIRITUAL WARFARE IN THE COMMUNITY: Weapons & Tactics

- Q1 The Bible talks about spiritual warfare at the individual, local and territorial levels in terms of the Flesh, the World system and the Demonic.
See [Living In A Spiritual Warzone](#); [Know Your Enemy](#); [Jesus' Victory in the Desert](#)
What evidence do you see of these in your local community?
- Q2 Which of the following are the most important issues for your local community ?
 Abortion Alcoholism & binge-drinking Crime eg car crime; break-ins; breach of the peace; anti-social behaviour Domestic abuse Drug addiction Family breakup
 Juvenile crime Poverty Prostitution & sexual immorality Sickness and community ill health Teenage pregnancies Thefts and break-ins Unemployment Vandalism
 Violence eg gang fights; muggings; robberies with violence; murder
Other.....
- Q3 What action can we take as Christians to tackle these issues in our local communities?
- Q4 In what way(s) is your church/fellowship involved in tackling the issues facing your local community?
What evidence is there of its effectiveness?
- Q5 How might our attempts to tackle community problems be improved?



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Week 5: CHRISTIAN SUFFERING & GRIEF

- Q1 What experience do members of the group have of suffering? Use the list below as a starter
- Bereavement by death
 - Grief at loss of a relationship
 - Loss of a limb through accident
 - Physical disability
 - Mental health problems
 - Loss of a job/redundancy
 - Experience of rejection
 - Experience of trauma
 - Injustice / wrongful conviction, etc
 - Physical, emotional, mental or sexual abuse
 - Being bullied or harassed at work
 - Suffering persecution for your beliefs
 - Other kinds of grief.....
- Which is the most painful? Physical pain? Emotional anguish? Suffering injustice?
- Q2 To what does the Bible attribute evil and suffering? See [Living In A Fallen World](#)
- Q3 Look at the unit headed [Christian Grief](#).
What can we learn about grief from the work of studies of patient attitudes to death & dying?
What stages can be seen in a typical experience of grief at the loss of a loved one?
How can Christians help those experiencing grief of various kinds?
- Q4 Look at the unit headed [Biblical Lessons In Suffering](#).
Choose one of the topics and discuss the lessons to be learned about how to face suffering from the life of *Job, Joseph, Jesus, Paul* or *Peter*.
- Q5 What tools and weapons has God provided to help us cope with suffering?
What have the members of the group found the most helpful things to cope with real suffering?



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Questions for Group Discussion

Week 6: SHARING CHRIST'S SUFFERING: Ministering To The Hurting & Vulnerable In Society

- Q1 What was Jesus' mission as expressed in ISAIAH 61:1-3 and LUKE 4:18-19?
What commission did Jesus give his disciples in LUKE 9:1 and 10:1,8-9 and 17-20?
- Q2 Look at the topics headed [Wounded Healers](#) and [God's Recycling Process](#)
What is the commonest way God takes his love and compassion to a sin-sick world of suffering?
- Q3 What examples can you see among the members of the group of God's recycling process?
In what ways has this helped to guide each person to a role or ministry in the Body of Christ?
- Q4 How does your fellowship/church/group show the love and compassion of Christ to your local community?
- Q5 How might your witness to the love and compassion of Christ be improved?



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Questions for Group Discussion

Week 7: CHRISTIAN MISSIONS TO THE HURTING

- Q1 Does your group/fellowship/church support any Christian missions? If so, which?
As a starter you could look at [The History Of Christian Missions](#)
How did each of these missions start? What evidence can you see of *the love cycle of ministry*?
- Q2 Take a look at the work of a missionary organisation you are involved with as a fellowship and discuss -
- How it began
 - How it shows the compassion of Christ to those it seeks to serve
 - The kinds of gifts and skills required by a missionary organisation to be effective
 - The financial requirements
 - Its effectiveness in bringing comfort to the suffering
 - Its effectiveness in witnessing to the love and compassion of Christ
- Q3 What is the process by which God calls individuals to show his love and compassion?
Have members of the group experienced the call of God on their lives to mission?
- Q4 How might the group/fellowship/church support the work of a mission more effectively?
- Q5 Why not invite a representative of a missionary organization along to share with the group about the work of the mission and ways in which to support the work.



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Week 8: IDENTIFYING WITH THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

- Q1 Look at the unit headed [From Witnesses To Martyrs](#).
What is one of the consequences of obeying the Great Commission?
in what ways is the history of the Church a history of persecution?
- Q2 What forms does persecution take / has persecution taken? See [Suffering For Christ](#)
- Q3 Does the group/fellowship/church support one of the organisations devoted to helping the Persecuted Church? If so, which of the following?
 Barnabas Fund Open Doors Release International Other.....
- Q4 Look at one of the following websites and find out more about what the organisation does.
[Barnabas Fund](#) ; [Open Doors](#); [Release International](#)
- How could the group or fellowship support Christians suffering persecution?
Do any of the group feel a calling to work with the persecuted?
- Q5 Tertullian said: *The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church*.
What evidence is there of this in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ?
For example, in former Communist countries; China; countries today?
For information on the history of Christian persecution, look at [History Of Persecution](#)



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Week 9: WHY ME, LORD? Why Bad Things Happen To Good People

- Q1 Look at the topic headed [Living In A Fallen World](#).
How does the Bible describe the origins of suffering in the world?
- Q2 Are Christians immune from the kinds of suffering the rest of the world experiences?
Look at [Biblical Lessons In Suffering](#) and [Living in a fallen world 2](#)
What do we learn from the Bible and the experience of Christians?
- Q3 What resources has God given us as Christians to cope with the problems of living in a fallen world?
- Q4 Take an example of Christian suffering (such as [Joni Eareckson Tada](#)) and discuss
- How she felt immediately after the accident
 - The problems she experienced in coming to terms with her situation
 - The way(s) in which God took her through the pain and showed her the way forward
 - The results of her being willing to go God's way
- Is God really able to make all things work together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purposes?(ROMANS 8:28)
- Q5 God will work in one of two ways if we find ourselves suffering. What are they?
How did God answer Paul's prayer for healing and Jesus' prayer to be saved from the Cross?
- Q6 Instead of feeling sorry for ourselves and saying "Why me, LORD?", what should our response be to suffering as Christians?



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Questions for Group Discussion

Week 10: ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD: God Turns Tragedies Into Triumphs

Q1 What is the greatest example of a tragedy being turned into a triumph of God's love?

Q2 Read ACTS 16:11-40 and PHILIPPIANS 1:12-19 and look at [Tragedy To Triumph](#)
How did God turn a situation of suffering into a triumph of his grace and mercy?

Q3 Watch the DVD or trailer of a film like [End Of The Spear](#)
How did God turn the massacre of some Christian missionaries by Auca Indians in Ecuador into a triumph of his saving grace and love?

What is Jim Elliot's most famous quote? If you don't know, go to [Jim Elliot](#)

Q4 Have members of the group experienced God turning a tragedy in their lives or the lives of Christian friends into triumphs of his grace? Are you able to share these experiences?

Q5 What evidence do you have of God's faithfulness in your life or the life of your family?