



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

Discussion Questions for Groups

03 THE PROBLEM OF EVIL & SUFFERING

03:01 Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People?

- Q1 What are the key ideas of a postmodern, scientific worldview today?
[see The Problem Of Evil]
- 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*)?
- 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 & suffering according to the Bible?
[see The Origins of Evil]
What evidence of this do you see in the world today?
- Q5 The classic formulation of the problem of evil states:
If God is all good, how does he allow evil and suffering to exist?
If God is all powerful, why doesn't he do something about it?

Why might this be false reasoning?
- Q6 How has God answered the challenge of evil and suffering?
[see God's Answer To Evil]



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Discussion Questions for Groups

03 **THE PROBLEM OF EVIL & SUFFERING**
03:02 **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** we read a statement of Jesus’ mission on earth. What was that?

- Q3 At the Cross Jesus reversed all three consequences of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. In what way? [The Cross of Christ Reverses the Fall of Man]

- Q4 The Cross is God’s answer to the challenge to God’s
The Resurrection is God’s answer to the challenge to his.....
What does the psalmist say in **PSALM 62:1-2**?

- 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]

- Q6 What is Christ’s commission to his disciples in the light of this?
[see Sharing Christ’s Compassion]



Discussion Questions for Groups

03 **THE PROBLEM OF EVIL & SUFFERING** **03:03** **SPIRITUAL WARFARE AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**

- Q1 The Bible mentions three enemies. What are they?
[see Know Your Enemies]
- Q2 Read **MATTHEW 4:1-11 The Temptations of Jesus in the Desert**
[see Jesus' Victory in the Desert]
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 is meant by (i) crucifying the flesh; (ii) being transformed by the renewing of your mind; and (iii) submitting to God, resisting the devil and seeing him flee?
- Q5 What particular aspects of the postmodern world are a challenge for us as Christians in terms of the flesh, the world and the devil?
- Q6 Why are so many Christian ministries destroyed by a failure to wage effective warfare at the personal level?
How could such collapses be avoided?



Discussion Questions for Groups

03 03:04 **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; Teenage pregnancies
 - Alcoholism & binge drinking
 - Crime eg car crime; break-ins; robbery; breach of the peace; vandalism
 - Domestic abuse
 - Drug addiction
 - Family breakup/divorce/single parent families
 - Juvenile crime; teenage gangs
 - Poverty
 - Prostitution & sexual immorality
 - Sickness and community ill health
 - Unemployment
 - Vandalism
 - Violent crime eg muggings; gang fights; robberies with violence; murder
- Q3 What action can we take as Christians to win back our local communities?
eg Mapping the area; prayer walking; petitions; political action; joint church witness;
Joint Prayer Meetings
- 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?



Discussion Questions for Groups

03

CHRISTIAN SUFFERING & GRIEF

03:05

Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People?

Q1

What experience do members of the group have of suffering?

- Bereavement through death
- Grief at loss of a relationship
- Loss of a limb through accident or illness
- Physical disability
- Mental health problems
- Loss of job/ redundancy
- Experience of rejection
- Experience of trauma
- Injustice/wrongful conviction
- Physical,, emotional, mental or sexual abuse
- Being bullied or harassed at work
- Suffering persecution for your beliefs
- Other kinds of grief

Q2

To what does the Bible attribute evil and suffering? [see Living In A Fallen World]

Q3

Look at the section headed *Christian Grief*.

What can we learn from studies of patients facing death?

What stages are typical in grieving the death of a loved one?

How can Christians help those experiencing pain and grief of various kinds?

Q4

Choose one of the people in the unit on *Biblical Lessons in Suffering*.

What lessons can we learn about how to face suffering?

Q5

What tools and weapons has God provided to help us cope with suffering?

What have group members found the most helpful things to cope with suffering?



Discussion Questions for Groups

03 SHARING CHRIST'S COMPASSION **03:06 Ministering To The Hurting & Vulnerable**

- Q1 What was Jesus' mission as expressed in ISAIAH 61:1-2 & LUKE 4:18-19?
What commission did Jesus give his disciples in LUKE 9:1; 10:1,8-9,17-20?
- Q2 Look at the section headed *Sharing Christ's Suffering*.
What is meant by "*The Cycle of Mission*" and "*God's Recycling Process*"?
- Q3 Why does God use "wounded healers"?
What examples can you see among the group of God's recycling process?
- Q4 How does your church/fellowship show the love of Christ to the vulnerable and those who are suffering in your local community?
- Q5 How might your ministry to the vulnerable and hurting be improved?



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Discussion Questions for Groups

03 **SHARING CHRIST'S COMPASSION** **03:07** **Christian Missions To The Hurting**

- Q1 Does your group/fellowship/church support any Christian missions?
Find out how the work started and what it does.
- Q2 Look at *The History of Christian Missions*.
Choose one of the missionary organisations you are involved with and discuss
- How it began
 - How it shows Christ's compassion to those it serves
 - The kinds of gifts and skills required by a missionary organisation
 - Financial arrangements
 - Its effectiveness in bringing comfort to those 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 any members of the group experienced the call of God to mission?
- Q4 How might the group/fellowship/church improve its support for missions?
- Q5 Why not invite a representative of a missionary organisation or a serving
missionary from your fellowship/church to come and share with the group
about the work of the mission and ways in which to support it.



Discussion Questions for Groups

03

SHARING CHRIST'S SUFFERING

03:08

Identifying With The Persecuted Church

- Q1 Look at the section headed *From Witnesses To Martyrs*.
What is the Greek word for "witnesses" Jesus uses in **ACTS 1:8**?
- Q2 What is one of the consequences of obeying Jesus' Great Commission?
In what way is the history of the Church a history of persecution?
For more on the history of Christian persecution look at *History of Persecution*.
- Q3 Look at the section headed *Suffering For Christ*.
What forms has persecution taken over the centuries?
- Q4 Look at one of the websites below and find out what the organisation does to help Christians being persecuted in different parts of the world.



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?

Open Doors publish a list of countries where persecution of Christians is taking place. To access it click [WORLD WATCH LIST](#).

How could the group or fellowship support Christians suffering persecution?
Do any of the group feel a calling to work with the persecuted?



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Discussion Questions for Groups

03 **SHARING CHRIST'S SUFFERING** 03:09 **Why Me, LORD? Living In A Fallen World**

- Q1 Look at the section headed *Living In A Fallen World*.
How does the Bible describe the origins of suffering?
- Q2 What resources has God given us to cope with the problems of living in a fallen world?
- Q3 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
- Q4 God will work in one of two ways when we are suffering. What are they?
How did God answer Paul's prayer for healing and Jesus' prayer to be saved from the agony of the Cross?
- Q5 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)
- Q6 Instead of feeling sorry for ourselves and saying "Why me, LORD?" what should our response be to suffering as Christians?



Discussion Questions for Groups

03 SHARING CHRIST'S SUFFERING 03:10 All Things Work Together For Good: God Can Turn Tragedies Into Triumphs

- Q1 What is the greatest example of a tragedy being turned to a triumph of God's grace?
- 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 trailer of a film like *End Of The Spear*. How did God turn the tragedy of the murder of the missionaries to the Aucas into a triumph of his grace?
- Q4 Have any members of the group experienced tragedy in their lives? If so, are you able to share how God has turned a tragedy into a triumph of his grace?
- Q5 What evidence do you have of God's faithfulness in your life or the lives of your family?
Do you agree with Paul in **ROMANS 8:28** that *all things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purposes*?