

Series Overview and Guides

2017-2018 ANNUAL THEME | SERIES 5

JUNE—JULY 2018

Objective

what we hope to see God accomplish in us through this study

Nothing turns us away from the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

STATEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVE

“Continue with double earnestness to serve your Lord when no visible result is before you. Any simpleton can follow the narrow path in the light: faith’s rare wisdom enables us to march on in the dark with infallible accuracy, since she places her hand in that of her great Guide. Between this and heaven there may be rougher weather yet, but it is all provided for by our covenant Head. In nothing let us be turned aside from the path which the divine call has urged us to pursue.”

—Charles Spurgeon,
Letters to My Students

See also Philippians 3:7-10, 13-14

Premise

why we are studying this

The problem of pain and evil torments the thinking of humanity. If improperly understood, it can lead to shipwrecked faith, cynicism, disengagement, and inability to use our powers for good. Since we all have suffered, and either are hurting or will in the future, we need to figure out how to flourish when life hurts.

STATEMENTS OF THE PREMISE

“For with much wisdom is much sorrow; as knowledge increases, grief increases.”
—Ecclesiastes 1:18 HCSB

“The more we grow spiritually, the taller we stand. Like massive trees, we are more likely to draw the lightning in life’s storms. The taller we stand, the more likely we are to absorb hell’s fire. Hell just doesn’t seem to like God’s growing trees...We will often suffer simply because we are the tallest tree in the area when the lightning strikes. In our neighborhood. In our office. In our family.

It is critically important that we understand this lesson. If we don’t, so much of our suffering just doesn’t seem to make sense. When tragedy strikes, we may automatically and inaccurately assume that God is punishing us. And nothing could be further from the truth. Just the opposite, it may well be that God is pleased with us and considers us worthy to suffer.”

—Steven Lawson,
When All Hell Breaks Loose

Theme

what the study is about

God sovereignly guides His people through times of doubt, difficulty, danger, and death. An anthropocentric response to such hurt usually determines that God is thus not God or not good. Tragically, this false perspective:

1. Makes “good” a human determination, effectively eliminating any true standard of goodness.
2. Leads to almost inevitable frustration and bitterness.
3. Limits our understanding and experience to the material world and the brief years of temporal life.

The biblical solution is simply profound: to better know the Sovereign, Triune God; to engage with Him; and as a result, to trust Him more.

STATEMENTS OF THE THEME

“All people – believers as well as unbelievers – experience anxiety, frustration, heartache and disappointment. Some suffer intense pain and catastrophic tragedies. But that which should distinguish the suffering of believers from unbelievers is the confidence that our suffering is under the control of an all-powerful and all-loving God; our suffering has meaning and purpose in God’s eternal plan, and He brings or allows to come into our lives only that which is for His glory and our good.”

—Jerry Bridges,
Trusting God

See also: James 1:2-4, Hebrews 11:33-35



Frisco Bible Church
a redeemed community

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The content of this study guide is based on the sermon and personal study notes of

Dr. M. Wayne Braudrick
Senior Pastor, Frisco Bible Church

and is developed by the Frisco Bible Curriculum Team:

Writers:
Ken Bergstedt, AJ Rinaldi, Randall Satchell, Steve Wilson

Editors:
AJ Rinaldi, Randall Satchell

Layout and Design:
Steve Wilson

SCRIPTURE QUOTATIONS

Unless otherwise indicated, scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

SERMON ACCESS ONLINE



You can watch the related sermons at www.friscobible.com/sermons or by scanning the QR code.

On the **Sermons** page, filter by Series and select **When Life Hurts**.

PERMISSION

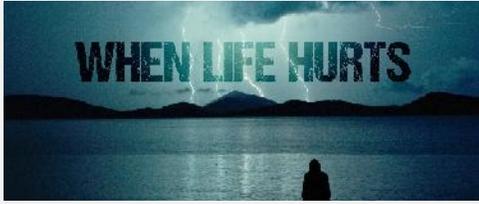
You are welcome to copy and distribute this study guide for your personal or group study.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Frisco Bible Church
8000 Sanctuary Drive
Frisco, TX 75033
972.335.8150
contactus@friscobible.com
www.friscobible.com

SERIES 5 | SESSION 1

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2017-2018

USE YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 5:1-5

KEY IDEAS

THEME

The theme of the series is really the theme of this message which sets the groundwork of the study.

God sovereignly guides His people through times of doubt, difficulty, danger, and death. An anthropocentric response to such hurt usually determines that God is thus not God or not good. Tragically, this false perspective:

1. Makes "good" a human determination, effectively eliminating any true standard of goodness.
2. Leads to almost inevitable frustration and bitterness.
3. Limits our understanding and experience to the material world and the brief years of temporal life.

The biblical solution is simply profound: to better know the Sovereign, Triune God; to engage with Him; and as a result, to trust Him more.

OBJECTIVE

We find hope and growth in God.

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that God will use us to encourage those around us who are suffering.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

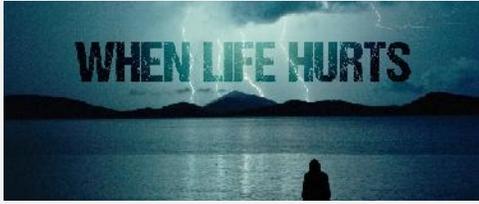
Session 1: Engaging with God in the Face of Affliction

1. Consider a time in your life of intense difficulty or suffering. Describe what happened, and how you responded.
 - How was your faith affected during the experience?
 - How was your faith affected after it was over?
2. Read Romans 5:1-5 together. Why does God allow suffering in our lives?
3. How can you use the ideas in Romans 5:1-5 to encourage someone experiencing a time of trial or suffering? Discuss each one.
 - Know that you have peace by God's decree.
 - Know that you have access to God Himself.
 - Know that you stand in grace.
 - Know that you will share His glory.
 - Know that this is the way we grow.
 - Know that our Christian hope will not let us down.
4. Compare Romans 5:3-5 and James 1:2-4. How do we grow as believers?
5. There are many things we learn from affliction. Discuss the following examples.
 - To be strong in the Lord: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; John 15:5; 2 Corinthians 1:8-9
 - To bear more fruit: John 15:2; Psalm 94:12
 - Holiness: Hebrews 12:10-11
 - Perseverance: Hebrews 10:32-34; James 1:2-3
 - Fellowship: 2 Corinthians 1:4; Revelation 1:9
 - Christlikeness: Philippians 3:10; Psalms such as 23, 61, 62
6. Ask some friends how you can pray for them. You will likely be amazed at the needs they will express to you.



SERIES 5 | SESSION 2

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2017-2018

USE YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Job, selected passages

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Job understandably but foolishly thinks his pain means God is not worthy to rule. Elihu and God Himself speak truth that changes everything about Job in his painful waiting. By absorbing those same revelations, we can also move to a fuller and deeper love relationship with YHWH.

OBJECTIVE

We respond to God Almighty.

MEGAPHONE TO A DEAF WORLD

"Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

—C.S. Lewis,
The Problem of Pain

JOB 37:23

"The Almighty—we cannot find him; he is great in power; justice and abundant righteousness he will not violate."

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we will keep a correct perspective of Almighty God and His "justice and abundant righteousness" (Job 37:23).

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

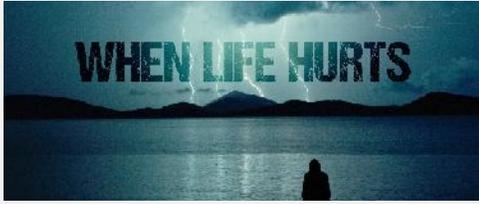
Session 2: Engaging with God in Waiting or Loss

1. What was the biggest loss you have experienced?
 - What emotions did you experience during that time, particularly to or about God?
 - What was your walk with God like afterwards?
2. Read Job 1:13-19 and 30:26-29. How would you describe Job's loss in chapter 1, and his feelings about that loss from his words in chapter 30?
 - Why does suffering lead us to make God in our image; that is, to make Him less than He actually is?
 - Why do we think God doesn't know what He is doing?
3. In Job 36 and 37, God is described by Elihu as a fair judge, and the almighty controller of all seasons' weather. Compared to God, Elihu says our wisdom is only conceit (37:24). The challenging response is "Quit thinking you are so wise."
 - How does an awareness of God Almighty change Job's perspective?
 - How might this awareness change your perspective in a time of personal loss?
4. Read Job 42:1-6.
 - How does an awareness of God Almighty change Job's perspective?
 - How might this awareness change your perspective in a time of personal loss?
5. If you have experienced loss in the past, do you harbor any anger or resentment toward God? How can this group pray specifically for you? Are there others in our church family currently going through loss who need our prayers?



SERIES 5 | SESSION 3

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2017-2018

USE YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Job, selected passages

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Mistakes – every human but Jesus makes them. But some mistakes make life really hard. Tops on that list are interpersonal pains, bad theology, and stinking thinking in your own mind.

OBJECTIVE

We remember truth about God.

REMEMBER GOD'S HESED

They refused to listen and did not remember Your wonders You performed among them. They became stiff-necked and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But You are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in faithful love [hesed], and You did not abandon them.

—Nehemiah 9:17 (HCSB)

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week that we will remember God's truths in the midst of pain caused by mistakes, both on the part of others and in our own thinking.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

Session 3: Engaging with God Through Mistakes

1. Review the Theme for this week (see the left column). Think about the three categories of mistakes listed. Discuss a few examples as a group, and how they could and do cause personal pain.

INTERPERSONAL MISTAKES: LACK OF COMPASSION

2. Read Job 5:17 and 6:14.
 - What mistake did Eliphaz make in his communication with Job?
 - Think of a time when you were criticized in an unloving way. How did you respond?
 - How can someone who is in pain make their need for kindness known, without being unkind in turn?

INTERPERSONAL MISTAKES: NAME CALLING

3. Zophar resorted to name calling when he interacted with Job, but Job saw through that foolishness. See Job 11:12 and 12:1.
 - How can we guard our hearts to recognize and reject foolish input from others?

BAD THEOLOGY FROM OTHERS

4. Bad theology rejects God's revealed word in Scripture, follows humans, and leads back to slavery.
 - Give an example of bad theology you have recently heard. Why was it bad theology?
 - Good theology does not deny judgment, but also remembers God's forgiveness by grace. Why does good theology emphasize grace, compassion, *hesed* (God's lovingkindness), and mercy?

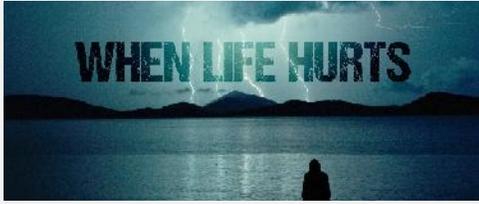
BAD THINKING ON OUR OWN

5. Read Job 9:27-31.
 - Why do we sometimes, like Job, think our sin is unforgiveable?
 - Discuss some verses or passages from Scripture which can help correct this error in our thinking.
 - Job realized his own error and came back around to good thinking. See Job 19:25-27. How do these verses encourage you?



SERIES 5 | SESSION 4

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2017-2018

USE YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 139:13-16

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Nearly every human struggles with problems in we today call self-image. The solution is not propping up the self, but rather looking to God. Understanding Him, His plans, and His love change our perspective. We realize and rejoice in the truth that we are not castoff junk. We are instead precious and purposeful to our Creator.

OBJECTIVE

We trust God and His plan.

FINGERPRINTS OF GOD

I can see the fingerprints of God
 When I look at you
 I can see the fingerprints of God
 And I know it's true
 You're a masterpiece
 That all creation quietly applauds
 And you're covered with the fingerprints
 of God

—Steven Curtis Chapman

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we will praise God our Father, remembering that He has formed us and our days, and that He alone is our portion and hope.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

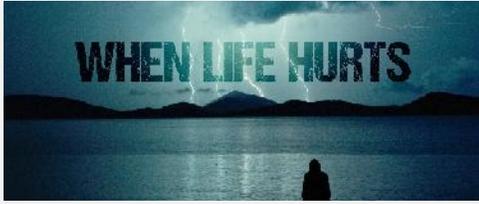
Session 4: Engaging with God when Unsure of Yourself

1. Most everyone has experienced self-image issues at some point. As you grew up, what did you not like about yourself?
 - What about us has God specifically made and formed? (verse 13)
 - What should be our response to being specifically made by God? (verse 14)
 - Beyond our physical and spiritual beings, what else has God formed for us? (verse 16)
 - How does Psalm 139:13-16 impact your self evaluation?
3. If God has used your weaknesses to bring Him glory, describe an example of what He did through you!
4. How should Psalm 139:13-16 impact your attitude and actions toward those with disabilities?
5. In Lamentations 3:19-23, Jeremiah found hope amid affliction and despair.
 - What was the reason for his hope?
 - How can this truth impact your life when you feel unsure of yourself?



SERIES 5 | SESSION 5

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2017-2018

USE YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Ecclesiastes, selected passages

KEY IDEAS

THEME

One of the hardest things in life is managing prosperity. Desire for wealth, lack of money, and stewardship are all straining to individuals and relationships. The only means for properly handling it all is through engagement with God.

OBJECTIVE

We trust God with money.

1 TIMOTHY 6:9-10, 17-19

9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, 19 thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Session 5: Engaging with God in Prosperity and Poverty

1. Why do we cringe when the preacher announces that the subject of the sermon is money?

- What might this reveal about our heart, or our attitude toward money?

- Why is it important to recognize that God is the source of our wealth?

2. In a series titled "When Life Hurts," why include a session on money? Discuss as a group.

3. Read Ecclesiastes 5:10 and 1 Timothy 6:9-10. What does loving money lead to?

4. Read Ecclesiastes 5:18 and 1 Timothy 6:17-19. How should we respond to what God has given us?

5. According to Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, what is the most important matter to remember?

PRAYER

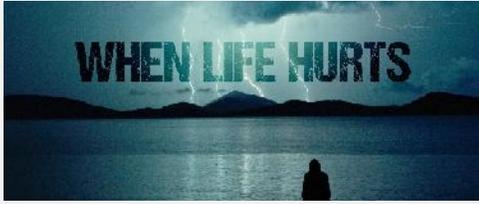
Pray for each other this week, that we remain grateful to God for all we have, continue content in His provision, and remember that our life in Christ is the only lasting treasure.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.



SERIES 5 | SESSION 6

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2017-2018

USE YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 5 & 10

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Persecution is painful but promised. It is about God yet directed to His people. Persecution maims a culture, yet the culture applauds itself for this self-mutilation. Persecution should never be overstated as a political tool but must be honestly faced when it arises.

OBJECTIVE

We respond to persecution biblically.

TRANSFORMING AMERICA

They [radical atheist groups] want to fundamentally change America. They want to transform heart and soul – the DNA – of our tradition, history, and heritage. Anti-religious groups, for example, are so zealous to cleanse religion out of the public square that they won't even tolerate the public recognition of religious imagery that is simply part of a community's historic tradition.

—First Liberty Institute, *Atheists Raging to Bring Down Religious Symbols*

PRAYER

Pray for Christians facing persecution, especially those in other countries facing physical violence against themselves or their families for their faith. See Acts 4:29 for an example of how the early Church prayed.

Use the back of this page to write prayer requests.

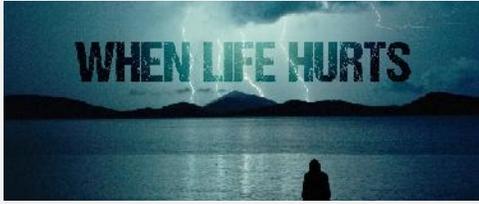
Session 6: Engaging with God under Persecution

1. What opposition have Christians faced recently, either in general, or specific Christians you know? How do we see this manifest in the United States as well as abroad?
 - How do these passages help us understand situations such as those you just discussed?
 - Discuss why such situations should be expected by every Christian.
 - What is the true target of such opposition?
2. Read Matthew 10:16 and 25, and John 15:18-21
 - How could an understanding of Matthew 5:11 help us endure persecution?
3. How could an understanding of Matthew 5:11 help us endure persecution?
4. What are some ways we should respond to persecution or opposition from the world? Discuss insights from the following passages.
 - Matthew 5:44-45 and Romans 12:14
 - Psalm 35:1-3
 - Matthew 10:23
5. For those who attended the sermon on July 15, 2018: Discuss what you learned from the interviews with the representatives of First Liberty Institute.



SERIES 5 | SESSION 7

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2017-2018

USE YOUR POWERS FOR GOOD

SCRIPTURE READING

Jeremiah, selected passages

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jeremiah lived in one of the worst situations imaginable. In a milieu of upheaval, persecution, and foolishness, Jeremiah used his powers for good. He: stayed on point, even in pain; lamented with YHWH; shared life with a friend; prayed blessing on the land of sojourn; spoke truthful hope; and pointed to Messiah Jesus.

OBJECTIVE

We point to Jesus.

WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Borrowing widely from other lands, thriving on dissent and originality, the West has been the mongrel civilization par excellence. But in spite of patchwork and conflict it has pursued characteristic purposes—that is its unity—and now these purposes, carried out to their utmost possibility, are bringing about its demise. This ending is shown by the deadlocks of our time: for and against nationalism, for and against individualism, for and against the high arts, for and against strict morals and religious belief.

—Jacques Barzun,
From Dawn to Decadence

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we would be faithful witnesses of God’s truth, both to our fellow believers and to the culture around us.

Session 7: Engaging with God Amid Cultural Decay

1. How has the culture surrounding you decayed in your lifetime?
 - Have you ever suffered violence for your witness of Jesus Christ? If so, how did it affect your boldness afterward?
 - Compare Acts 5:17-21a, 27-32, 40-42. How willing are you to speak God’s truth to those who need to hear it?
2. In Jeremiah 19:14-20:6, Jeremiah spoke by God’s command even to his own hurt, and afterward.
 - How do you express your frustration to God, especially about the prevailing culture?
 - How do you ensure that you move beyond that frustration?
3. In Jeremiah’s prayer in 20:7-13, he moves from lament to hope to praise.
 - What are some practical ways to live out Jeremiah 29:7?
 - Read Jeremiah 29:8-14.
 - What are some ways to speak hope to the believers around you, to “build up the church” (as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:12)?
 - How will verse 14 be fulfilled under the new covenant through Messiah Jesus?
4. What are some practical ways to live out Jeremiah 29:7?
5. Read Jeremiah 29:8-14.
 - What are some ways to speak hope to the believers around you, to “build up the church” (as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:12)?
 - How will verse 14 be fulfilled under the new covenant through Messiah Jesus?
6. Jeremiah used his powers for good in a decaying culture, even though it brought him trouble. How can we selflessly use our powers for good to help others around us in a culture that’s increasingly dark and hostile?

