

Conversation Starters

- What was the best thing about your weekend?
- What was your greatest challenge in the past week?

Discuss

Everyone goes through pain and suffering at some point, and many of us are right now. It's natural to then wonder why me, why this and why now. God often speaks to us during our pain and suffering and attempts to give us a particular message, if we would listen. Jesus often followed a point He was trying to make by asking us to do just that:

“Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!” ([Matthew 11:15 NLT](#))

- Do you ever stop to consider what God may be saying to you during pain and suffering?

God sometimes allows pain and suffering into our life...

1. To warn us. While physical pain doesn't feel good, it's actually a helpful thing to tell our body when we should avoid something. In the same way, God can allow pain to warn us for our own benefit.

To whom can I give warning? Who will listen when I speak?... ([Jeremiah 6:10 NLT](#))

- Have you ever had a painful experience, only to realize later that it was a good thing?

2. To drive us to our knees. We don't always have our ears attuned to what God has to say to us, but He loves us too much to not try His best to get our attention in order for us to turn to Him.

Then one night the Lord appeared to Solomon and said, “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this Temple as the place for making sacrifices. At times I might shut up the heavens so that no rain falls, or command grasshoppers to devour your crops, or send plagues among you. Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land. My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place. ([2 Chronicles 7:12-15 NLT](#))

- Are you more prone to go to God when things are good or when they're bad?

3. To strengthen us. God is in the soul making business – He wants us to grow and be strong. Like a muscle, sometimes we have to be torn down in order to be built up.

...but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4perseverance, character; and character, hope. ([Romans 5:3-4 NIV](#))

- Can you think of a time when you've experienced growth? How did it happen?

4. To help others. When we've experienced pain and suffering, we can relate with others better than someone who hasn't had the same experience. While that's not easy to think through in the moment, when the time comes to serve someone else, our testimony can have much greater weight to it.

All praise to the God and Father of our Master, Jesus the Messiah! Father of all mercy! God of all healing counsel! He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us. ([2 Corinthians 1:3-4 The Message](#))

- How might you be serving someone else right now?

5. To release God’s power in our life. Sometimes we can see God’s power better by seeing someone go through a storm rather than if healing or a miracle was to happen.

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. “Rabbi,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?” “It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,” Jesus answered. “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. ([John 9:1-3 NLT](#))

- Do you know someone who is inspiring to you because of their perseverance?

6. To call us to trust. Faith is trusting what you can’t see. Sometimes we can’t explain pain and suffering, and we just have to simply trust God. If we read His Word, we learn that He alone is good and that He wants the absolute best for every one of us so He will be involved in all things to help for good.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him... ([Romans 8:28 NIV](#))

- Do you have trouble trusting God when it hurts most?
- Do you have an idea of what God may be saying to you right now?

Next Steps

God cares about our pain and suffering, and He wants to be involved in it ([1 Peter 5:7](#)). Spend time this week in prayer, sharing any pain and suffering with Him and then taking a few minutes to just sit and listen. What do you hear?

We all have room to grow. The [Meck Institute](#) is a great place to continue learning about God’s teaching for your life. **Want to take the weekend discussion a bit further?** Join us for our [Virtual Groups](#) that meet online to discuss with others what we’re learning each week and how it applies to everyday life.

Further Reflection

Read [2 Corinthians 12:7-10](#); [1 Corinthians 10:13](#).

Pray

God, Your Bible tells us and shows us that You are good and trustworthy. It’s hard to see that sometimes during our pain and suffering, and we forget that about You. Forgive us when we do. Thank You for caring about all of the details of our life and wanting to be with us. Help us to see You when we experience pain and suffering, to hear You when You want to speak, and to trust You through it all.