



INTRODUCTION

We are in week two of our series, *Hang-Ups*, and Pastor John is helping us explore the concept of suffering. Genesis teaches us God created humans to live in perfect and holy harmony with Him. However, through the fall, sin brought evil and suffering to the world. No human goes through life untouched by pain and suffering. Christians can take comfort in knowing Jesus endured suffering and stands with us in our pain.

DISCUSSION

1. **Reflect on Genesis 50:20.** Joseph stands out as an example of responding to suffering in a godly way. Think of a time when you personally wrestled with the problem of suffering. In what ways did the sermon help shape your thinking on that experience? Discuss as a group.
2. Our response to suffering is sometimes unhelpful to others. Although true, statements such as “God has a plan for this” can sometimes feel hurtful when used at an inappropriate time. In what ways can you be more godly and compassionate as you engage with those who are suffering?
3. **Read Revelation 21:4.** On this earth, we have the comfort of Jesus being present with us. We also have the comfort and hope of eternal life. In what ways does Jesus bring us hope, for both the present and the future? Discuss as a group.
4. **Read Romans 5:3-4.** Pray as a group for strength during times of suffering. Ask God to draw near to Him through the trials you face. Pray also for an appropriate, godly response as you encounter the sin and evil in this world on both a local and global scale.

DO SOMETHING

1. Engage with someone in your Little Iowa who is experiencing pain or suffering. Although our tendency can be to avoid the pain of others, ask God to show you how to tangibly love, include and bless this person.
2. Take time to journal about the issue of pain and suffering in your life and in the world. Write about what questions you have, and look for ways to go deeper and learn more.
3. Seek out a trusted peer, pastor or mentor to discuss any questions you have or areas you need guidance in relation to suffering.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. *The Problem of God: Answering a Skeptic's Challenges to Christianity* by Mark Clark (2017).
2. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* by Timothy Keller (2008).
3. “Is There Meaning in Evil and Suffering?” by Ravi Zacharias - Right Now Media