

Don't Waste The Hard Things

Romans 8:18-39

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Unstoppable Hope

Reflect

Outline: Recap

Realize

Points to Ponder

Respond

Questions to draw out understanding.

REFLECT

It's unavoidable, but sometimes hard to accept — the reality that suffering is not optional. And the thing about suffering is so often it feels pointless...We find ourselves asking, "Why is this happening? And where is God?" But no matter how it may appear to us at the moment, nothing is wasted with God. And even in the experiences that bring us the most pain, he is at work, imagining outcomes we never could, for his glory and our good.

[LINK to SMALL GROUP VIDEO MATERIALS](#)

REALIZE

1. Suffering is not optional

- **Romans 8:18**
- **Leader Notes**
 - We are living in a fallen world. This means that our lives here on earth are, to a certain extent, broken. This brokenness shows up in many ways. We see it in the form of natural disasters, sickness, death, and sin. All of these forms of brokenness result in suffering.
 - This is not what God intended at the beginning of time. He wants what is best for his creation, but man chose his own way in Genesis 3, and now struggle and suffering are a normal part of our lives. However, our amazing God still desires more for us! He made a way through his Son, Jesus. Even though we lost the glory of the Garden of Eden, he has an even greater glory in store for us in Heaven. As Paul wrote the book of Romans, he knew that what is in store for us is so incredible that it's not even worth comparing to our current struggles.
 - As we confront different areas of brokenness in our lives we must stay focused on the reality of Heaven that awaits us. God has placed that hope within us, and one day that hope will be realized. It is that hope which will see us through suffering.
- **Describe a season in your life where you suffered. Did you see God working in the midst of your struggle? If not, how did you deal with that and choose to trust him? If so, what did you learn? How has suffering shaped how you see yourself and God?**

2. Hope defined

- **Romans 8:24-25**
- **Leader Notes**

- We weren't just saved so that we could know safety and security after we die. We were saved into an unstoppable hope that is available to us right now, in our current circumstances. This is a crazy concept, because hope isn't something that you can taste, touch, or measure. It is unseen, growing beneath the surface. Hope will not always be a part of our lives. One day we will see Jesus face to face, and we won't have to hope. We will see.
- Until that day, we have to invest in true hope. Living in true hope means paying forward that trust that we have in the Lord. Even when we don't know how things are going to work out, our job is to remain eager, patient, and persevering. We might not know the outcome, but we know the One in whom we have believed.
- In a hopeless world, our true hope is a game-changer. When we have true hope, we can have a no-quit attitude. When we have true hope, we know God is at work even when we don't see it.
- True hope isn't just something we listen to and agree with. It is something that we preach to ourselves day after day. When we are tempted to spiral, that is the moment we must cling to the Scriptures and choose hope.
- **What is one thing in your life where you are choosing to hope in God despite the uncertainty of the future? How are you doing at walking out the qualities of hope (eagerness, patience and perseverance) right now?**

3. We have the help we need

- **Romans 8:26**
- **Leader Notes**
 - God has given us the Spirit to help us in our weakness, to intercede for us. Intercession is a beautiful act. Whether between two people or between man and God, the act of intercession is to stand in the gap, to speak for someone who cannot speak for themselves. The Holy Spirit, who is our Helper, speaks on our behalf.
 - Especially in the midst of suffering, it is so hard to know how to pray. When we are discouraged, it is so easy to lose sight of hope. If you are struggling to find your voice in prayer, cry out to God anyway. It doesn't have to sound fancy or even make sense. The Spirit hears us and stands in the gap for us, saying what we are unable to say.
 - When we are suffering it is so easy to feel hopeless, or even helpless. But our God has provided all that we need to make it through this season. His Spirit is the help we need to walk with unstoppable hope in our present suffering.
- **Describe a time when you didn't know what to do in a major decision, or even how to pray about it. How did God help you then? What is something you need his help with today? Are you trusting him?**

4. God's goal is Jesus-likeness

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- **Leader Notes**
 - In times of suffering God often feels far away. While we know that this is not the reality, it can be hard to find him when our hope feels low. We often draw away, wondering why he would allow this brokenness in our lives. While God does not inflict suffering, but he does allow it, and beyond that, he transforms it.
 - God can transform any circumstance to be used for his glory and our good. He leverages our suffering to conform us to the image of Christ. As we become more like Jesus, we gain a deeper understanding of the unstoppable hope that we have.
 - We all want to be transformed. We all want to be more like Jesus. Even if we can see it, God is doing a powerful work in each and every one of us. Continue to hope. Continue to press into the presence of God. He has such good things in store for us.

- **How do you see God transforming you to make you more like Jesus? What are some qualities Jesus demonstrates that you want to demonstrate more powerfully in your own life?**

Optional Follow-up Questions:

- What makes you say that?
- How do you feel about that?
- How would you explain your answer to a non-Christian friend or neighbor?
- Why did God design it to work that way? Why not just do (whatever else) instead?
- What would you say to someone who disagrees with that?
- Why do we really have to do it like that? Why can't we just go (some other route) instead?