

Don't Waste The Hard Things

Romans 8:18-39

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Unstoppable Hope

Think About It!

What did we learn?

Talk About It!

What does it mean?

Do It!

What are we going to do?

Think About It!

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](#)

Talk About It!

1. Suffering is not optional

- **Romans 8:18**
- **Parent Notes**
 - **Have you ever had a bad day? Maybe you got hurt or got sick. Maybe you weren't getting along with someone you love. What was that day like?** We all have bad days because the world we live in is broken. We can see this brokenness when things don't work the way that God wanted them to work, when people get hurt or sick or don't treat each other with kindness.
 - **Why is the world broken?** God made a perfect world. He put his creation, humans, in that world, and they broke it. But when we broke God's perfect world, he didn't give up on us. He had a plan to save us from our brokenness. He sent his Son, Jesus, to save us. Now, we can look forward to the perfect world that God has planned for us--Heaven.
 - **What do you know about Heaven?** When we see something broken in this world, it makes us sad. Sometimes we forget the perfect world that God has planned. Heaven is our hope! When we are sad about the broken places in our world, we need to remember what's ahead.

2. Hope defined

- Romans 8:24-25
- Parent Notes
 - **(Hey parents! A fun activity that goes with this discussion is to measure the height of your kids and talk about how much they've grown. You can just talk through these points, or you can get out the measuring tape!) How much have you grown this year? How much has your hope grown this year?** Hope is hard to measure, isn't it? We can't taste it, touch it, or see it, but we know it's growing inside of us. Jesus didn't give us the promise of Heaven so that we could have hope someday, we can have hope today! One day, we won't need it any more because we will see Jesus face to face.
 - **What are some things that help us to grow taller?** (Eating healthy food, getting sleep, exercise, etc.) **Did you know that you can do things that will make hope grow inside of you?** Just like our muscles, hope get stretched sometimes. When we're having a bad day and we're feeling sad, we can choose to hope. Every time we choose hope, our hope grows a little bit. Even if we don't know what's going to happen, we know how much God loves us, and that's something we can hope in!
 - **Have you ever told yourself to hope?** You can do that! When it's hard to hope, you can look yourself in the mirror and tell yourself, "Today, we're going to choose hope!" **(Parents, you can repeat this a few times with your kids!)** Sometimes we have to remind ourselves every day! When we are having a bad day, we need to remember that our hope is in Jesus and what he's got planned.

3. We have the help we need

- Romans 8:26
- Parent Notes
 - **Have you ever wanted to say something, but didn't know how to say it? What was that like? Did someone (a parent, teacher, or sibling) help you find the right words?** God knows that this happens to us a lot, so he gave us some help. He gave us his Holy Spirit to live inside of us. The Holy Spirit has a lot of jobs, but one of those jobs is saying the words to God that we don't know how to say.
 - **Do you ever think that your prayers need to sound special or fancy?** It feels good when we have special, beautiful-sounding words to say to God. Sometimes, we just don't have any. When this happens, we can hold onto hope by crying out to God anyway. Sometimes we just need to call out to him and believe that the Holy Spirit is going to help us to say what we don't know how to say.
 - **When you're having a hard day is it easier or harder to talk to God?** When we're having a bad day, sometimes we forget to talk to God. Talking to him on our bad days is the best way to help hope grow. Don't know what to say? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you!

4. God's goal is Jesus-likeness

- **Romans 8:28-30**
- **Parent Notes**
 - **Have you ever wondered why bad things happen?** On our bad days, God often feels far away. Even though we know he's always there, it can be hard to find him when our hope feels low. While God does not make the bad things happen, he sometimes lets them happen and then turns them around to use them for good!
 - **What are some bad things that you have seen God turn around for good?** God can turn around any situation! Not only that, but he uses our bad days to make us more like Jesus. As we become more like Jesus, our hope grows!
 - **How have you seen yourself grow and become more like Jesus?** We all want to be more like Jesus. Even if we can see it right now, God is doing a powerful work in each and every one of us. We just need to keep hoping and keep believing that God is doing good things!

Optional Follow-up Questions:

- What makes you say that?
- How does that make you feel?
- How would you explain this to someone who doesn't know Jesus?
- Why do you think God did it that way?
- Why should we do the things that God tells us?