

Think It Over: This section is about turning what God is saying to you into action steps. These talking points, questions, and scriptures are designed to help you take your own next step. If you are leading a group through this guide, don't feel like you have to answer every question. Pick out those questions that will stir up conversation and action among your group.

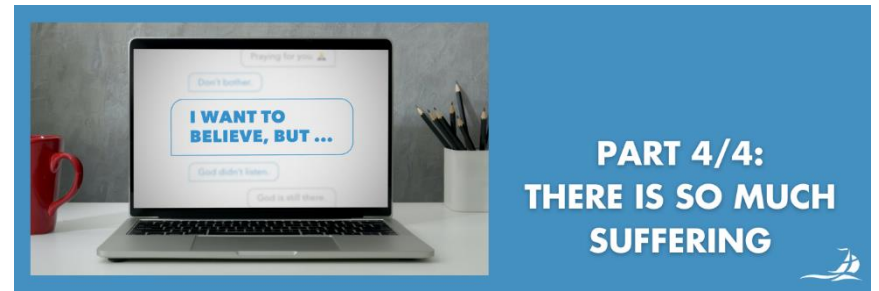
- Have you ever had someone say to you, "I would believe in God, but there is too much suffering?" How did you answer them? Why is that such a tough one? What is a good answer to that question?
- Have you personally ever asked God, "How could You let this happen?" What life events led to your question? Have you come to terms with the event that made you ask that question?
- What are some of the reasons for suffering in our world? Look at Proverbs 20:30 and Isaiah 5:20 from the message guide. If you were God, what are a few reasons you wouldn't stop all pain? Or, would you?
- What do you know about the story of Job? How do you feel about the cause of his suffering? Why do you think Job was able to respond the way he did (Job 1:18-22; 2:8-10)? How can you be prepared as you can be for suffering? While someone is in the middle of great pain, what could you tell them about God?
- Review the "When tragedy hits, remember" section. What might you add? "God doesn't always cause the pain, but God can always use it." How have you seen this play out? "We want God to give us what we want. God wants to show us that He is what we need." How have you seen this play out?
- Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. What difficulties can you begin to view from this Scripture's perspective?
- Review the "When tragedy strikes, respond..." section. What might you add? Why shouldn't we be surprised? How do you feel about the answer? We quote Proverbs 3:5-6 often, but leave off 7 and beyond; why is that?

Next Steps: Are any of you in the middle of something painful now? How can we pray with you to invite God into it? How can the Bottom Line affect your response to suffering? What are some steps you can take to make it more a part of your life?

Changing Your Mind: Choose one of the verses listed in the Message Guide and commit it to heart.



If you missed a message, visit www.scc.website or request a CD at Guest Services.



Cause and Effect

³⁰*Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways.*
Proverbs 20:30 TEV

²⁰*You are doomed! You call evil good and call good evil. You turn darkness into light and light into darkness. You make what is bitter sweet, and what is sweet you make bitter.*
Isaiah 5:20 TEV

Sudden and Severe

¹⁸*While he was still talking, another messenger arrived and said, "Your children were having a party at the home of the oldest brother ¹⁹when a tornado swept in off the desert and struck the house. It collapsed on the young people and they died. I'm the only one to get out alive and tell you what happened."* ²⁰*Job got to his feet, ripped his robe, shaved his head, then fell to the ground and worshiped: ²¹Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked I'll return to the womb of the earth. God gives, God takes. God's name be ever blessed. ²²Not once through all this did Job sin; not once did he blame God.*

Job 1:18–22 MSG

When tragedy hits, remember...

⁹*His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your faith? Why don't you just curse God and die!" ¹⁰Job answered, "You sound like one of those fools on the street corner! How can we accept all the good things that God gives us and not accept the problems?" So even after all that happened to Job, he did not sin. He did not accuse God of doing anything wrong.* Job 2:9-10 ERV

➤ God has a purpose.

¹²*Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job.*
1 Peter 4:12 MSG

⁶...There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. ⁷ These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. 1 Peter 1:6-7 NLT

God doesn't always cause the pain,
but God can always use it.

➔ God is present.

¹... finally, GOD answered Job from the eye of a violent storm...
Job 38:1 MSG

¹⁸The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
Psalm 34:18 NIV

⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to relieve me of this. ⁹But [God] said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness...”
2 Corinthians 12:9 TPT, NIV

We want God to give us what we want.
God wants to show us that He is what we need.

⁹...Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
2 Corinthians 12:9-10 NIV

Be glad God is not always fair, but always just.
If He was fair, we would get what we deserve.

¹⁰[God] does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. ¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; ¹²as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
Psalm 103:10-12 NIV

When tragedy strikes, respond...

➔ Don't be surprised.

³³Jesus said “...In this world you will be plagued with times of trouble. I've told you all this so that by trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace [not overcome by feelings of entrapment] But take heart! I have overcome the world.”
John 16:33 NIV, Voice, MSG, DFS

¹²My friends, don't be surprised at the painful things that you are now suffering, which are testing your faith...
1 Peter 4:12 ERV

➔ Look for the good.

¹¹I know what I'm doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for.
Jeremiah 29:11 MSG

³⁰Sometimes it takes a painful experience to make us change our ways.
Proverbs 20:30 TEV

➔ Lean on God.

²⁴The LORD directs our steps, so why try to understand everything along the way?
Proverbs 20:24 NLT

⁵Trust GOD from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. ⁶Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track. ⁷Don't assume that you know it all. Run to God! Run from evil! ⁹Honor God with everything... ¹¹But don't, dear friend, resent God's discipline; don't sulk under his loving correction. ¹²It's the child he loves that God corrects; a father's delight is behind all this.
Proverbs 3:5–7, 9, 11-12 MSG

Bottom Line:

God doesn't always cause your pain,
but God can always use it.

Resources for this message include Life Church & Saddleback Church.

To help you turn what God is saying to you into action steps, consider using the Think It Over section on the back.