

CRISIS OF FAITH STUDY GUIDE

WEEK 5: WHY DID GOD LET THIS HAPPEN?

Primary Passage: John 11:1-44

Related Passages: Job 1:1-21, Hebrews 4:15-16, Revelation 21:1-8

"We were promised sufferings. They were part of the program. We were even told, 'Blessed are they that mourn,' and I accept it. I've got nothing that I hadn't bargained for. Of course it is different when the thing happens to oneself, not to others, and in reality, not imagination."

-C.S. Lewis

LifeGroup Study Guide: (Structure group time to have 20 minutes of prayer at the end.)

Recap: Have someone in your LifeGroup give a quick recap of the story in John 11:1-44.

Read John 11:3, 20-27 and 32. How do Mary and Martha respond to their brother's death? What typical responses do you see people having when they are grieving? What are your typical responses when you are grieving?

Read John 11:23-26 and 33-35. Why does Jesus respond so differently to the sisters even though they say the same thing to Him? Are you more likely to respond to someone who is suffering with tears or words of truth? Why?

Read John 11:21 and 32. Do you relate to the statement both of the sisters say to Jesus? Have you ever found yourself saying, "God, You could have changed this." or "Why did You let this happen?" Have you ever wondered where God was in the midst of your suffering?

- Have you ever found yourself in the midst of pain acting like God is on trial? Have you ever assumed that because you don't know a reason, God cannot have one?

In our suffering, we frequently get attacked with four specific doubts about God:

- God doesn't love me or I don't know if I can trust God is good/loving.
- God isn't powerful or in control.
- God isn't wise enough to realize that this isn't best for my life.
- God isn't with me. God has abandoned me.

Where have you been attacked with these doubts (or any other of these types of doubts)? How does the cross push back against these?

Prayer Time: (20-25 minutes)

Read Psalm 62:5-8. Who in our LifeGroup is really wrestling with suffering right now? (Might be actively suffering in a current situation or lingering suffering that they haven't dealt with.)

- Group up around them and give them a few minutes to pour their heart out to God. Dump every emotion and frustration they're dealing with.
- And then pray for them as a group and assure them of God's love for them and presence with them in the midst of their pain.