

## Cell Group Lesson: The Purposes of Pain and Suffering

**Ice Breaker:** Who was your best friend when you were growing up?

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**Facilitator's Opening Comments:** Pain in our lives can '*overcome*' us or make us '*over comers*.' We often ask "why me?" when pain injects itself into our lives...We're going to study what the Bible says about the purposes of pain and suffering in our lives. Let's start our lesson by reading the definition of the word ***pain***.

### **Read**

**Definition of pain:** a state of physical, emotional, or mental lack of well-being that ranges from mild discomfort to acute often unbearable agony. It is the consequence of being injured or hurt physically or mentally, that usually produces a reaction of wanting to avoid, escape, or destroy the source of the pain.

**Facilitator's Comments:** Pain is an inevitable part of our lives and, due to the fall of mankind in the Garden, it has been with us since the beginning...let's read about it in Genesis 3:16....

### **Read**

**Genesis 3:16** - To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with ***pain*** you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." 17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through ***painful*** toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. (NIV)

**Question:** Why do you think that God chose pain as part of the consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience?

**Answer:** Some have suggested that the 'perfect' world was over, because of giving into the flesh, and now the flesh would suffer the consequences.

**Facilitator's Comments:** The following verses are examples of both physical and emotional pain... Let's start by reading Psalm 38:7

### **Read**

**Psalm 38:7** - My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body. (NIV)

**Question:** Do you remember a time when you were in a great deal of pain...? What was your reaction and how did you handle it (or how are you handling it, now?)

**Facilitator's Comments:** There are times when we have emotional pain due to issues in our lives, or what we see others going through. Psalm 55:4 describes this type of pain...

### **Read**

**Psalm 55:4** - My heart is severely pained within me, And the terrors of death have fallen upon me. (NKJV)

**Question:** Why can emotional pain, actually be more painful sometimes, than physical pain?

**Answer:** We often would rather suffer than see our loved ones suffer. And 'heart pain' often hurts more than 'physical pain?'

**Facilitator's Comments:** Paul talks about dealing with the church in Galatia in Galatians 4:19...let's read it...

### **Read**

**Galatians 4:19** - My dear children, for whom I am again in the ***pains of childbirth*** until Christ is formed in you, (NIV)

**Question:** Why is it sometimes painful when we mentor or help others grow in their walk with God?

**Answer:** There is great effort involved in the discipleship of others as we help them grow in Christ

**Facilitator's Comments:** Let's discuss some of the reasons **why** pain is allowed into our lives. One reason is that it tests our level of faithfulness. Let's read Job 6:10...

### Read

**Job 6:10** - Then I would still have this consolation — my joy in unrelenting pain— that I had not denied the words of the Holy One. (NIV)

**Question:** How is our faith tested during times of pain?

**Answer:** We are tested in the area of being faithful to God during the hard times and in our belief that God knows what He is doing and what is best for us. We can say we're faithful, but we only really know if we're faithful when we are tested.

**Facilitator's Comments:** We may at times need correction from the Lord, but His correction is always to our benefit, as stated in Hebrews 12:11..

### Read

**Hebrews 12:11** - Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (NKJV)

**Question:** What is the value of correction in this verse?

**Answer:** It leads to the fruit of righteousness, in our lives

**Question:** How are we made better after a time of God-inspired correction?

**Answer:** Weak areas will be strengthened and if we were walking on a path of destruction, we will be re-directed onto a more blessed pathway.

**Facilitator's Comments:** Let's continue by reading our 1<sup>st</sup> Commentary..

### Read

#### **1st Commentary**

**1 Peter 5:10** - *And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.*"(NIV) Pain with a purpose is easier to endure. 1 Peter 5:10 reminds us that our suffering can result in us being restored, strengthened, and made more firm and steadfast. A life free of problems and challenges will never produce this type of growth in our spirit and faith in God. The U.S. Marines have a slogan that says: "*Pain is weakness leaving the body.*" And so also can passing through pain make us stronger.

**Facilitator's Comments:** We are all affected when someone we care about is suffering...let's read 1 Corinthians 12:26...

### Read

**1 Corinthians 12:26** - And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. (NKJV)

**Question:** How does the suffering of other members of the Family-of-God bring us closer together as a family?

**Answer:** We lay aside our issues and our hearts become tender by seeing others in pain and it releases in our hearts a desire to help. We are the Lord's hands. Also going through adversity together brings us closer together.

**Facilitator's Comments:** Let's read our 2nd Commentary:

**Read**

**2nd Commentary**

We need to remember that nothing comes into our lives that hasn't first past through the Hands of God. There is always a reason for everything in the life of a believer...and there is a reason and purpose for your pain. Romans 8:18 says "*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*" (NKJV) Christ is our example that pain can result in victory and glory, as stated by William Penn, when he wrote about what our Lord went through: "*No pain, no palm; no thorns, no throne; no gall, no glory; no cross, no crown.*"

**Facilitator's Comments:** Let's read what we can do during these seasons of pain....

**Read**

**1 Peter 4:19** - So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. (NIV)

**Question:** What two things are we told to do, in 1 Peter 4:19, when we are in a time of suffering?

**Answer:** We should re-commit ourselves to our faithful Lord and keep working for Him, by continuing to do good.

**Facilitator's Comments:** Let's read about our comfort during pain, in 2 Corinthians 1:5...

**Read**

**2 Corinthians 1:5** - For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. (NIV)

**Question:** How does comfort flow into our lives, during difficult times?

**Answer:** We find peace in prayer, support from our loved ones, and have the comfort in knowing that all things work together for the good, to them that love the Lord.

**Facilitator's Comments:** Let's read the ultimate result of our pain, in Revelation 21:4...

**Read**

**Revelation 21:4** - And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (NKJV)

**Facilitator's Comments:** Let's read our 3<sup>rd</sup> Commentary

**Read**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Commentary**

We see in Genesis the *principle* that for there to be growth, there will be pain, whether it's the growth of a family (Eve-in childbirth), the growth of crops (Adam-toiling the ground), or growth in our spiritual walk with God. No matter how intense the pain, how long the suffering, or how deep the sorrow, one day you will "fight life's final war with pain." God Himself will wipe away every tear from your eyes. So keep going, enduring, and staying strong, because "*Pain is temporary - but Heaven is forever.*"

**Facilitator's Comments:** Let's stand and pray and recommit ourselves to our faithful Creator knowing that there is a purpose for our pain and we should not paralyze our praise due to pain...but, continue in faith believing that weeping may endure for a night, but joy will come in the morning...

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### 1st Commentary

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### 2nd Commentary

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### 3rd Commentary

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Himself will wipe away every tear from your eyes. So keep going, enduring, and staying strong, because "Pain is temporary - but Heaven is forever."