

GROUP DISCUSSION

Questions for facilitating dynamic discussion

Under Siege

Week 5: Trophy Presentation

Isaiah 38:15-17

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When life is harder than we expect, God's Word equips us to stand strong. And while human perspective would say that struggles are simply bad, we learn this week that there are many benefits we can reap through times of hardship.

Kicking It Off:

Valentine's Day is this week. Tell us: what is the most romantic gesture you've witnessed?

Discussion:

1. "It's not fair!" When you've committed to following God, hardship can seem unjust: *what did I do to deserve this?* Have you ever felt that way?
2. Read Isaiah 38:1-3. How did Hezekiah respond to Isaiah's pronouncement that he would die from his illness? What plea did he make to God for himself?
"And Hezekiah wept bitterly." ~ Isaiah 38:3b (NIV)
3. How did **God** respond to Hezekiah's plea (Read Isa. 38:4-8). What does this tell you about God's attitude toward our complaints or feelings of injustice in suffering?
4. We know from Jeff's sermon this week and last that God has plans for our hardship that we can't always see or understand at the time. Indeed, Hezekiah recognized the benefits after the fact. What benefits did Jeff enumerate from Hezekiah's poem (Isa. 38:15-17) in his sermon this week? (Humility, Vitality, Reliance, Affection, Forgiveness).
5. In his poem Hezekiah reviews his suffering and the benefits of it. And then he describes his posture going forward as a result in verses 18-20. Read those verses. What does Hezekiah say his purpose is in light of God's rescue? Have you ever considered that your challenges could result in praise and glory for the Lord?
6. Think about times you've suffered in the past. How did something that seemed hard at the time ultimately grow you in humility, spiritual vitality, reliance on God, knowledge of God's love, or a new experience of God's forgiveness? Take time to praise God for this.

Wrapping Up:

Throughout this series Jeff has been teaching us a Theology of Suffering. Pray that your group would be encouraged to apply this theology by taking a Hezekiah approach: to review past hardships for benefits and reasons to praise God.

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ~ 2 Cor. 4:17 (NIV)