

## Week 3: Why Does God Allow Pain & Suffering?

### Before the Meeting...

- Several days before your group meeting, review the *Weekly Gameplan* (emailed to you during week 1) to remind you of some Community Group objectives.
- Remember to combine resources from [exploregod.com](http://exploregod.com) and these supplemental resources for your group time together.
- Is someone dominating your discussions? Are you looking for ideas for more effective prayer times in your group meetings? [Check out Page 4 & 5 these notes for group leaders.](#)

### During the Meeting...

#### Break the Ice (choose one)

1. "When it rains, it pours." To what scenario in your life might that saying refer?
2. Briefly describe a time when you made a really stupid decision which resulted in pain or suffering for you or for someone else? (*Don't glorify these things; just own them.*)
3. Briefly describe for the group your most restful, worry-free vacation experience.

#### Watch Video 1: Pulse of the World on Pain and Suffering

#### Discuss from among the following:

1. Discuss the Explore God (EG) provided questions as applicable (see EG material)
2. Bouncing off of the first two weeks of Explore God, why might it be helpful to believe that there really is a God and that life does have a purpose, if one is to make sense of pain & suffering? How have you observed others who have no belief in God, respond to pain and suffering? How have they made sense of it?
3. Is it more difficult to make sense of pain and suffering when we (ourselves) suffer, or when we see others suffer? Why so?

#### Watch Video 2: The Curiosity Collective: Why Does God Allow Pain and Suffering?

#### Discuss from among the following:

1. Discuss the Explore God (EG) provided questions as applicable (see EG material). There are some great questions pertaining to the video.
2. On Sunday, Pastor Dwayne taught that God created a perfect earth but that mankind's disobedience introduced pain, suffering and death into that perfect world. (See Genesis 1 & 3) Discuss why God gave mankind the ability to make this choice. (*Examples: God's love seeks relationship rather than robots who must obey; Mankind is ignorant of a perfect world until he has experience in a broken one; Some aspects of God will only be revealed during times of struggle and pain – His presence, strength, peace, wisdom, etc.*)

3. *“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is God’s megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”* \_C.S. Lewis *The Problem of Pain*

Agree or Disagree? Why so?

When has God “gotten your attention” through pain or suffering (either your own or someone else’s)? How did you respond to it?

4. Briefly relate some life lessons that pain and suffering have taught you? How likely is it that you might have learned these lessons in some other way?
5. What did pastor Dwayne mean on Sunday when he urged us to not to “waste” our pain? (See 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 4:16-18; Romans 5:3-5)

### Inspire

1. Ask a volunteer to read the following aloud:  
*2 Corinthians 1:3-4 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”*

Briefly describe a time when God used someone else’s experience with suffering to comfort you?

2. Who in your life (at work, family, neighborhood, etc.) might God be calling you to “comfort” this week? What might that look like?

### Prayer & Ministry

Turn on some worship music (as background) and invite people to respond to the following:

1. What trouble or suffering are you going through right now? (OR, What in your life has been “carried off, put to the sword, burned up, or blown away” as in Job’s life)?

*Encourage other group members to surround anyone who responds and begin ministry to them by first sitting with them and allowing tears to flow as compassion swells. Then, spend time praying for that person to find God’s presence and grace during this trial and to come out on the other side. 1 Peter 5:9-10 is encouraging!*

If no one responds to #1 above, having been given adequate time to do so, pray for anyone who was mentioned in #2 under the *Inspire* section above.

2. Ask a volunteer to read Revelation 21:1-4 aloud. Spend time thanking God for his certain promise of a perfect world for all eternity!

### After the meeting...

- Remind the group that rotating meeting locations among group members’ homes is helpful in getting to know one another. Ask any volunteers for hosting to connect with you.

### Pastor Dwayne’s Further Recommendations:

- Great Explore God video: [What is the Source of Pain & Suffering](#)
- Search the Explore God website for “suffering” and you’ll get LOTS of resources!
- Email the attached .PDF [Does God Care When I Hurt?](#) to your group members this week.