

# Growth Group Homework

For the week of April 13, 2014

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## QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this weekend's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

## MY STORY

1. This week Chris mentioned our suffering can bless or help others. Is there anyone in your life who has gone through great difficulty that has encouraged you or given you a better perspective on life?
2. How was Christianity described to you before you made a commitment to follow Jesus – that life would be so much better with Jesus, or that you just signed up for extra pain and suffering?
3. When you think of suffering and/or challenges in your life, in what category or “source of suffering” from this week's teaching would you say most of it has taken place?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. This week we heard God may actually be allowing us to suffer for our own benefit. That can be hard to understand at times, especially when we're in the middle of it. What can we learn from the following passages about what the benefit of our suffering may be?

James 1:2-4

Hebrews 5:7-8

1 Peter 1:6-7

2 Corinthians 1:3-6

How do you think our attitude affects our willingness to accept trials as God's tool to benefit us?

2. We heard this weekend that our hardships and suffering as Christians may be because of our own bad choices. In those cases, it's often not our faith that gets us in trouble or causes others to turn on us, but our “meddling.” What guidelines or insights can you find in Ephesians 4:29-5:2 to help you avoid this pitfall?

Are there any “meddling actions” you might need to take a look at in your own life?

3. Knowing that God is still at work for the positive in our life is an important reassurance in the midst of life’s challenges (Philippians 1:6). Fortunately, it also gives us the resources to help deal with these challenges. What resources do you find in the following passages that can help you cope with, handle or even grow through a hard season in life?

John 14:25-27

Philippians 4:6-7

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Can you think of any examples of how any of these resources have helped you? Is there one you tend to forget more than the others?

### **TAKING IT HOME**

1. Looking back on this week’s sermon and study, what’s most important for you to remember?

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Prayer Requests:

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### James 1:2-4

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. [NIV]

### Hebrews 5:7-8

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered [NIV]

### 1 Peter 1:6-7

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. [NIV]

## **2 Corinthians 1:3-6**

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. 5 For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. 6 If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. [NIV]

How do you think our attitude affects our willingness to accept trials as God's tool to benefit us?

2. We heard this weekend that our hardships and suffering as Christians may be because of our own bad choices. In those cases, it's often not our faith that gets us in trouble or causes others to turn on us, but our "meddling." What guidelines or insights can you find in Ephesians 4:29-5:2 to help you avoid this pitfall?

## **Ephesians 4:29-5:2**

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. 5 1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. [NIV]

Are there any "meddling actions" you might need to take a look at in your own life?

3. Knowing that God is still at work for the positive in our life is an important reassurance in the midst of life's challenges (Philippians 1:6). Fortunately, it also gives us the resources to help deal with these challenges. What resources do you find in the following passages that can help you cope with, handle or even grow through a hard season in life?

## **John 14:25-27**

"All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. [NIV]

## **Philippians 4:6-7**

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [NIV]

**Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: 10 If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. 11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? 12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. [NIV]

Can you think of any examples of how any of these resources have helped you? Is there one you tend to forget more than the others?

**TAKING IT HOME**

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