

## APPLICATION

- Are you able to trust and obey God in every circumstance? In what areas of your life do you need to trust God more? How can you apply what you've learned?
- What can you do to keep your perspective aligned to God's Word?
- How can you support a friend or family member going through trials right now? Ask God for specific ways to encourage this person.

## PRAYER

- Thank God for who He is, for His sovereignty and eternal knowledge and understanding. Pray for a trusting heart in the midst of trials.
- Pray for a fresh revelation of God's Word as you spend time reading it daily. Pray for specific ways to apply what you've learned.
- Intercede for your family members and friends who are going through difficult situations. Pray that God would use you to point them to His Word.



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WEEK 2



WHY ME?

# Reasons for Suffering

## NOTES

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## WARM-UP

- Would you consider yourself a curious person? Why or why not?
- What was the worst advice you've ever received from someone? Why did you choose not to heed it?
- How has someone's counsel helped you through a difficult situation?

## WORD

<sup>2</sup>Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup>for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup>And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. **JAMES 1:2-4**

People deal with suffering in different ways. We may try to make sense of our situation by reasoning out on our own or seeking words of comfort from other people. While these are not necessarily wrong, we must guard our minds against the wrong perspectives. In this lesson, we will look at three different perspectives we may have during a time of suffering, as evident in the life of Job.

## 1 My own limited understanding

<sup>1</sup>After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. <sup>2</sup>And Job said: <sup>3</sup>"Let the day perish on which I was born, and the night that said, 'A man is conceived.'" **JOB 3:1-3**

The Bible describes Job as blameless, upright, and God-fearing (Job 1:2). Yet, in his anguish, he cursed the day he was born. In our humanity, we may suffer and not understand why, but we must look beyond our circumstances and instead trust God—the one who knows and understands everything. How can a change of perspective take place in our lives, even while we are in the midst of trials? (Proverbs 3:5-6)

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## 2 Others' perspectives

<sup>9</sup>Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." <sup>10</sup>But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

**JOB 2:9-10**

The people around Job had different views on his situation. Job's wife told him to *curse God and die*. Instead, Job chose to worship God. His three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—believed that Job's sin caused him to suffer. While it's true that sin can lead to suffering, it doesn't always follow that suffering is caused by sin. How can we guard our mind and heart against wrong perspectives?

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## 3 God's sovereign and eternal perspective

<sup>1</sup>Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: <sup>2</sup>"Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? <sup>3</sup>Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. <sup>4</sup>Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding." **JOB 38:1-4**

When God spoke, Job understood that no lament (Job 3:1-3) or defense (Job 23:4-7) could compare to the sovereign and eternal perspective of God (Job 40:3-5). He may not have known why God allowed him to suffer, but he did not have to understand everything around him to simply trust, obey, and glorify God. Why can we trust God even when we don't understand? Share about a time when you trusted God despite your limited understanding.

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