Caregiver SUPPORT

DISCUSSION GUIDE #07

If God is Good, Why is There Mental Illness?

Our present sufferings will not be able to compare with our future hope.

WELCOME

» Welcome attendees, look for newcomers and acknowledge them specifically

» Share the group's mission statement:

This is a safe and judgment-free environment where caregivers can find support, encouragement, and help to lift their eyes to Christ.

» Review guidelines for the meeting:

  » Begin and end at set times

  » Respect time allotted for sharing, set by facilitator

  » What is shared in the meetings is confidential, unless it involves abuse of a minor

  » Offer an empathetic and respectful ear to others

WHAT THIS GROUP IS

  » A place to biblically care for the caregivers

  » A place to bring the hope of the gospel to their situations

  » A place to pray for God to meet and bless them with the hope of the gospel

  » A place to listen, to hear struggles, and give help from the bible

  » A place to encourage

WHAT THIS GROUP IS NOT

  » A place to deal with 'patient care' solutions and diagnosis for your loved one

  » A place to give direction for patient care for your loved one

  » A place to hear answers to 'fix' your loved one and the situation you have

  » A place to share political opinions

» Open in prayer

» Encourage group to share current situations (3 minutes). Be sensitive to new attendees.

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QUESTION

The question for tonight's discussion is, "If God is good, why is there mental illness?" **Leader: Give an example from your own life.*

DISCUSSION

Let's read Romans 8:18-25,

> *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.*
>
> *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation but we ourselves who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved, Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."*

What in the world do these verses mean? How does this help us think through the question, "If God is good, why is there mental illness?" Have you ever wrestled with this question? **Allow for discussion.*

OBSERVATIONS

This present time brings suffering. God tells us right here in Romans that creation is groaning even longing for everything wrong to be set right. God's heart for us is to be set free from our sins. He desires to give us something better. It is so much better that Paul says our current sufferings cannot even compare.

This does not mean that God doesn't care about our pain, or the injustices we experience, far from it. He feels our pain and is there for us. But as Christians, we can take comfort that one day God promises that all the sad things in our lives will become untrue.

HOPE

And what is the hope that Paul refers to in Romans 8:24 that we just read? "For in this hope we are saved?"

Well, earlier in chapter 5 of Romans we see this promise for everyone who has put their faith in Jesus,

> *"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the of the glory of God."*

Because of Christ's finished work, we can have solid hope. We can be sure that one day all of the sad things we experience now, will be made right and our present sufferings will not be able to compare with them. But even more than that, we can be free from our sins and have peace with God.

GO DEEPER

» Read Romans 8:18-25. Underline every word about groaning and every word about hope. Notice that they sit side by side.

» If you aren't a Christian and want to know more about the gospel and what Jesus has done, talk with another Christian you may know.

» We encourage you to be a part of a local church that preaches from the Bible. If you need help thinking through that, feel free to reach out to us.

PRAYER OF LAMENT AND HOPE

Dear Jesus,

Thank you that we can bring our problems to you, there is nothing too hard for you. Sometimes our burdens just seem too much, and we can struggle with knowing that you are good or that you even love us. Help us to remember in those hard times the truth from your bible about who you say your are. You are good, you do love us, we can see this most clearly in the gospel. Help us tonight as we lay our heads down on our pillows to rest peacefully, give us good sleep. We trust you God and we thank you that one day you will make everything right.

Amen.