

Home Group Leader's Notes: Week of February 11

Daniel 6 of Inverted series (final week)

SHARE IT

What is the 'American' view of suffering?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *This difficult topic is found throughout the New Testament. While is not a clever way to introduce the topic, perhaps the conversation can start here. In America, our view of suffering is often connected with avoidance or denial.*

Our focus for this week is actually on suffering caused by living as a Christ-follower in our culture. Jesus promised that following Him would be difficult – even that people would hate us. We are now seeing this in America.

However, beware of focusing on the complaint. Rather, the goal is to help us understand that we are privileged and blessed to suffer for His name. AND, that our behavior should be characterized by both righteousness and grace to others.

STUDY THE WORD

Read Daniel 6. What was Daniel's civil disobedience? How/why did he 'get caught?'

NOTES TO LEADERS: *The king was tricked into making a law against praying to God. His habits of prayer to God were well known. He refused to stop praying.*

What was Daniel's attitude toward the suffering he might face?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *He was OK with facing the penalty of death by lions. I don't believe this was only because he was 83 at the time. He had been resolved to live faithfully since he was a young man.*

What was the result of Daniel's faith in his times and ours? (See Hebrews 11:33; 12:1)

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Daniel's faith glorified God (honored and made Him known), influenced unbelievers to consider God, encouraged and spurred on other believers in God, and influenced people in high places who eventually allowed the Jews to return to their home country. (His faith also led him to live with integrity and grace.)*

Jesus promised us that if we followed Him, we would suffer in some way: mental, physical, emotional, or spiritual. But He also promised that they would be blessed (Matthew 5:22).

Consider what the following Scriptures say about suffering:

John 15:18-19 – *the world may hate us. We are chosen out of this world.*

Philippians 1:29 – *we have been granted (Lit. “gifted” or “graced”) to suffer*

1 Peter 4:13-14 – *we are to rejoice /be blessed when suffering with Christ*

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 – *we need to have eternity in our hearts when suffering*

Revelation 22:12 – *Christ is returning with reward for those who suffer for Him*

DISCUSS TOGETHER

What do you think it means to live in such an overt manner in your obedience to God that it is noticed? Are we living with enough contrast to the world? In what ways?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *The “contrast” question above is telling. Are we noticed? If not, what areas of our lives are not in conformity to living by the Spirit?*

Believers have suffered throughout history. What about us – is there suffering here? Is there a disconnect with the very idea?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *If we are living for Christ, suffering can occur in many ways: physical, emotional, spiritual, mental, etc.. Currently, we are being bombarded in the news, restricted in our behavior in schools and offices, disregarded in conversations, ignored for promotions, and kept outside of social circles. Some rejection we bring on when we are obnoxious or pushy.*

What are some right reasons that we might suffer? How should we view this suffering? (See Galatians 1:10; 1 Peter 4:12-19) How is this always about Jesus?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Right reasons include refusal to do wrong or condone sin, unwilling to enter into gossip, etc.. Jesus said that when are persecuted for His names sake (i.e. living as His follower) that it is He who is rejected and persecuted.*

MAY THE SPIRIT OF GOD LEAD YOU WITH POWER AND WISDOM,

STEVE