



How Do I Know God Loves Me?

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Focus God is gracious to us, and He welcomes us to ask Him life's toughest questions. Life is painful at times. God created pain to keep us from hurting ourselves even more, but He did not create suffering. God created a perfect world, but Satan ruined it through our sin.

Fun What is your favorite at-home pastime?

Review Key Scripture: John 11:1–6, 11:11–14

1. Why did You create pain?

Many of us are facing difficult times right now, but it is possible that God is doing something that we don't understand in the midst of our pain. God created pain to keep us from hurting ourselves. An example of this is our senses. When we feel pain, we are able to prevent actions that bring us significant harm.

2. Why did You create suffering?

God didn't create suffering. God didn't create war, sickness, poverty, or injustice. God created a perfect world, and then Satan brought sin into the world. Those things came with sin. We live in a fallen world, and therefore we suffer.

3. Why did You suffer?

Because of God's great love for us, the Creator became the creation, and He didn't exempt Himself from suffering. Jesus subjected Himself to everything we go through, even suffering and death. He knows what it's like to live in this fallen world. God takes what the devil means for evil and uses it for your good because He loves you.

Group Dynamics Idea Call the members of your group and ask them how they are doing and how you can pray for them. Pray with them at the end of the conversation and let them know you are available during this difficult time.

Discuss

1. Read John 11:21. How would you have felt if you were in Mary and Martha's position and Jesus delayed coming to help your brother? What questions do you think they were asking themselves while they waited?
2. Have you ever gone through a difficult season where you wondered where God was in the moment? What was it and did you have a better perspective years later?
3. Why do you think God sometimes delays answering certain prayers?
4. Read Matthew 16:21. How does it comfort you knowing Jesus was a human and experienced pain and suffering so He can identify with ours?
5. Why do you think people blame God for their suffering? How does understanding the true cause of suffering (sin and freewill) help give a better perspective during times of suffering?
6. How can you encourage others when they are in times of pain or suffering?

Take Home As we conclude, remember the following:

- God created pain to keep us from hurting ourselves.
- God didn't create suffering.
- God loves us and wants to rescue us from our suffering.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the way You love us. Thank You for the ways You demonstrate Your love. Help us to comfort those who suffer and to encourage them that You didn't create their suffering. Thank You for taking all pain and suffering on the cross and for making a way for us to experience heaven where there will be no more pain or sorrow. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip As a new leader, it's easy to become overwhelmed with all the needs that can arise within a group. This is where the power of prayer comes in. The Bible tells us to cast our cares on Him. This is true for you personally, but it is also a way you can take the burdens of those in your group and lay them at God's feet. When you pray specifically for the needs and burdens that arise, God will take the weight of them, and you will be free to lead without carrying a weight that is not yours to carry.