

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, January 27, 2013

Passage: Romans 5:3-5

Memory Passage: Romans 6:1-3

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 5:1-5.** To what does “that” refer in the phrase, “And more than that” that begins v. 3? How are rejoicing in sufferings and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God related? How is being able to rejoice in your sufferings a benefit of being justified by faith (5:1)?

(b) Write a definition for the word “sufferings.” Now think for a moment of everything that you experience that could be considered suffering and write them down. Think for a moment about the Roman church and write down everything that you can think of that they experienced that could be considered sufferings. Now compare and contrast the 2 lists.

(c) What do we “know” that allows us to rejoice in sufferings? How do we know? Write a definition of “endurance.” What exactly is it that we are now able to endure as a result of our sufferings? How does suffering enable the production of this endurance? Look at the list of experiences you identified as sufferings in (b). For each one, write down the way it produced endurance in your life. Be ready to share this in your class as a means of encouragement to other believers.

(d) *Family: Read Rom. 5:1-3.* If needed, explain what the word suffer means, and then ask, “In what ways have you suffered?” Without belittling their suffering, **read together 2 Cor. 11:23-33** and make a list on your white board of all of the things Paul suffered. Then remind them that Rom. 5:3 says, “suffering produces endurance.” Explain, if necessary, what endurance is, and then ask how each of these things Paul suffered might have produced endurance in him. Then return to your family’s list of sufferings and help them see how these experiences will produce or have already produced endurance.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Rom. 5:1-5.** “Endurance produces character.” What is character? The Greek word behind this carries the idea of “tested character,” so would you say this character is good or bad? Upon what basis would you judge a person’s character to be good or bad? Why is suffering something that would produce character and how is this accomplished?

(b) The Greek word behind the word “endurance” means, “to bear up under.” **Read Luke 21:19, Rom. 15:4-5, Col. 1:11, Heb. 10:36, 12:1, Rev. 1:9, 2:2, 3:19, 3:10, 13:10 & 14:12.** Write down what you learn about endurance and the Christian life. How does endurance produce character (Rom. 5:4)? What are the implications of the fact that this endurance and tested character are products of being justified by faith?

(c) Does *all* endurance produced by suffering produce tested character? What would inhibit the production of tested character when one is enduring suffering? Have you ever suffered in a way that did not produce endurance or tested character? Why do you think the results of that instance were different than Paul’s progression here in Romans 5:2-4? What could you have changed in that instance in order to benefit from the suffering you went through?

(d) *Family: Read Romans 5:3-4a.* Explain that the word for “character” carried the idea of “tested character,” and refers to the mental, spiritual, and moral qualities of a person’s life. Ask, “In what ways might the endurance produced by suffering produce character?” Illustrate this by lifting a barbell, or anything with some weight to it that you can hold in your hand and “curl” from your elbow. As you curl the barbell, explain what would happen if your muscle was able to “endure” the “affliction” of being exercised every day for 10 hours straight (the muscle would grow and become stronger). Then apply that principle to the act of suffering well, which produces endurance (the ability to bear up under suffering) which produces tested character (a strengthened mental, spiritual, and moral capacity).

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Rom. 5:1-5.** What kind of hope does character produce (context, context, context!)? Is this a different hope than what was found in v. 2? What does this hope prohibit?

(b) When does this hope not put us to shame? Is there a kind of hope, or an object of hope, that *does* lead to us being put to shame? Explain your answer.

(c) What reason is given (“because”) for hope not putting us to shame? How does this fact tie in to the idea of justification by faith (5:1)? What role does the Holy Spirit play in walking well through our sufferings? Now that you have studied this passage a bit, answer this question: “How does rejoicing in our suffering lead to hope?”

(d) *Family: Read Romans 5:1-5* and review with your family what you have learned so far this week. Remind them that we are learning about some of the results of being justified by faith, and then teach them how v. 5 fits in to this passage. (Because we have been justified by faith we are able to rejoice in our sufferings because we know that even our sufferings are used by God to sanctify us by producing in us endurance, character, and hope, the certain hope that we will be given life on the day of

judgment because God has loved us by sending Christ to die for our sins and suffer His wrath.) Then choose 2 or 3 ways that your family, either individually or as a group, has suffered or will suffer, and apply these verses to that case study.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rom. 5:1-11, 1 Pet. 1:6-7 & James 1:2-4.** What similarities do you find in these 3 passages? What differences?
- (b) Are these 3 passages teaching essentially the same or different concepts? According to 1 Peter, in what are we rejoicing? What will the trials prove, and when will these trials produce their ultimate fruit?
- (c) According to James 1, what does enduring trials well ultimately produce in us? Explain what James means by the phrase, “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”
- (d) To what level does a challenge need to rise before you will call it a suffering or trial? What is your first reaction to trials and suffering in your life? Is it a response of anger? Sadness? Do you think, “I don’t deserve this?” Is it one of trust and peace? Is it one of love and longsuffering? What have you learned this week that will help you walk through these expected trials and suffering in a way that glorifies God and benefits you?
- (e) *Family:* Lead your family through (a) – (d) above.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Rom. 5:1-1 & Rom. 8:12-39.** Romans 5:1-8:39 form the second major division of Paul’s letter to the Romans. As you read the first and last passage of this major section, write down all of the similar words and themes you find. Then examine what you found, and write down what you think the one major theme of 5:1-8:39 might be, as well as several sub themes.
- (b) Now look at your major and sub themes and think about why Paul would make these the theme(s) of the second major section of his letter. How do they flow from what you learned in chapters 1-4? Why are these themes necessary after 1-4?
- (c) Spend the rest of today reading the first 8 chapters of Romans. Soak it in, but don’t get bogged down. Read for understanding, but don’t get side tracked. Write down any applications, questions, or thoughts you have during your reading.
- (d) *Family:* Over the next several weeks we will memorize Romans 6. Tonight spend time with your family reviewing their memorization of Romans 8 and then begin chapter 6 by memorizing together 6:1-3.

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Rejoicing in Sufferings