



Why does God allow bad things to happen?

May 24, 2020

Daily Devotions

SOAP Introduction

As an individual or as a family, use this SOAP study to connect with Jesus each day this week. SOAP stands for Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. When we do a SOAP study, we want to root ourselves in the Scriptures, observing what they have for us, applying them to our lives, and then communing with God in prayer both before and after our time in the Bible.

Each day there will be multiple Scriptures for you to ask questions about, sit with, hear from God, and be invited to respond in action to.

If you're doing this individually, be sure to prayerfully consider each day's truth, each day's passages, and each of the questions. If you are doing this as a family, don't be afraid to have each person in your family read one of the verses or to "popcorn read" if it's a longer passage (meaning, don't be afraid to have one person read a verse or two and then another read a couple verses and then another a couple verses).

Parents, if you are going through this with your children, be sure to ask questions that will help your children engage with the daily Scriptures by asking good, concrete questions.

Day One // It wasn't supposed to be this way

It's only necessary to have lived for a short time to know that evil and suffering exist in our world. We hear, see, and experience everything from diseases to struggling marriages. And we're often left wondering the question, "Why does God allow so much pain and suffering?" One reason for the pain and suffering in our world is because sin has corrupted God's good world he originally created.

Scripture: **Read Genesis 1-2.**

Observation: *What do I see in this passage?*

- What words or phrases resonate inside of you as you read and re-read these chapters?
- Have you ever asked the question, "Why does God allow so much pain and suffering?" What in your life prompted you to ask that? How did you resolve that question?
- List the characteristics that you find describing God's world in Genesis 1-2. What do these chapters tell you about God's intent for his creation?
- How does the world God created in Genesis 1-2 compare/contrast to your immediate experience of the world? How does this make you feel?

Application: *What do I do with what I've read?*

- What tangible action steps do you think God is inviting you into as a result of your reflection today?

Prayer: Prayerfully reflect on what your mind and heart's response to reading Genesis 1-2 are. Bring to God any thoughts or feelings that arise.

Day Two // God's good world...corrupted

As Christians, we believe the injustice, vitriol, racism, and violence in our world is because of sin. In the Bible, we read our world is "fallen.", meaning it's corrupted, tainted, not right. Both creation and people alike long for the brokenness of our world to be fixed. In Genesis 3, we read about how God's good world came to be marred by sin.

Scripture: **Read Genesis 3.**

Observation: *What do I see in this passage?*

- Read and re-read this chapter slowly. Which part of this chapter stands out to you most? Why?
- What experience have you gone through most recently that has made you say, "This world is not right"? What do you think God's heart is for that situation based off your reading yesterday in Genesis 1-2?
- On a scale of 1-10, how would you describe your awareness on a daily basis of the brokenness of creation? Why did you choose that number? How does choosing that number make you feel?
- In Genesis 3, Adam and Even contributed to the corruption of God's world because of their disobedience. In total honesty, in what ways have you brought brokenness into the world through your own disobedience? In what ways might you need to confess and repent?

Application: *What do I do with what I've read?*

- In what ways might you need to confess and repent after thinking about how you have brought brokenness into the world through your own disobedience?
- How are you going to work to bring healing and restoration to that situation?

Prayer: Spend time praying Psalm 51.

Day Three // Spiritual Warfare

There is a very real battle going on, one we don't consider often, that leads to much of the corruption of our world today. With our minds bent on the here, the now, and the physical world, we don't spend much time thinking about how there might be forces of evil seeking to bring about our destruction. But Satan and demons are real. There are "powers and principalities" at work in our world to get us to hurt one another. Genesis 4 and Paul's words in Ephesians 6 make this especially clear.

Scripture: **Read Genesis 4:1-16; Ephesians 6:12.**

Observation: *What do I see in this passage?*

- What words or phrases resonate with you as you read and re-read these passages? Why do you think those passages stood out to you?
- When have you felt like sin was "crouching" at your door? What happened? If you gave in, how did it end up "devouring" you? If you withstood the temptation, how did you do it?
- How would you define spiritual warfare?
- How would you describe your *awareness* of spiritual warfare in your own life?
- What specific "principalities and powers" do you think might be presently at work in your own life (i.e. sex, power, money, addictions, etc.)? Is there any history of these in your family?

Application: *What do I do with what I've read?*

- How do you think God is inviting you into action as a result of your reflection today?

Prayer: Write a prayer to God asking him to give you eyes to be more aware of the spiritual battles going on around you like in **2 Kings 6:17**.

Day Four // What if God has a good reason?

This past weekend, Dan mentioned five reasons as to why pain, evil, and suffering exist in our world. He mentioned it's because we have free will, others have free will, because we live in a fallen world, because we have an enemy, and because God sometimes disciplines his children.

Those make sense. But many times, we are still left wondering, "But why does God *allow* all of that to keep on going??" And the honest answer is that we just don't know.

However, just because we don't know that specific answer doesn't mean we can't find any comfort in it. What we do know is God's character. God is good. God is love. God is patient. God is holy. We could go on and on.

If that is God's character, and because he knows all and we do not, what if God has a good reason to allow our world to continue the way it is? If we knew everything God knew, would we still question him for allowing evil and suffering to continue?

Scripture: **Read Job 38-40:5.**

Observation: *What do I see in this passage?*

- What feelings are you left with after reading this passage about the LORD?
- How do these verses challenge you?
- What do you make of the idea that God might have a good reason for allowing sin and suffering to continue in our world, just unbeknownst to us? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
- How might having a reverence for God in the midst of your suffering change how you feel about your circumstances?
- How might knowing that God has a good reason for allowing you to go through your specific situation bring you solace?

Application: *What do I do with what I've read?*

- How do these verses change your perception of your relationship to God?
- What action steps might God be inviting you into today as a result of your reading?

Prayer: Write a prayer to God based off of your reading in **Job 38-40:5.**

Day Five // A God who knows our suffering

In Christ Jesus, we can know beyond a shadow of a doubt that God is not distant from our pain and struggles. He knows them intimately. He knows what it's like to feel spiritual pain, physical pain, and emotional pain of the highest degree.

Whatever the reason for God allowing pain and suffering in our world, it can't be that he doesn't love us or care about our suffering. The cross tells us that God loves us so much he would willingly leave his heavenly estate, enter into our world's brokenness, and experience it for himself to one day make all things new (Revelation 21).

Scripture: **Read Matthew 27:27-50; Revelation 21:1-8.**

Observation: *What do I see in this passage?*

- How does Jesus entering into this world knowing that he would be crucified make you feel about the love God has for you?
- Does it bring you any comfort to know that God knows exactly what you go through in life? Why or why not?
- How does the hope of Revelation 21 bring you peace in the midst of hardship? What feelings do you have in the present knowing that Revelation 21 is not here yet?
- What word would you use to describe the longing you have for a Revelation 21-kind-of-world? What are you doing in your life to help bring that about?

Application: *What do I do with what I've read?*

- Based off of this reading today, how can you be a tangible expression of Jesus to others in your own life?

Prayer: *Father, thank you that you are not distant to my suffering. Thank you for loving me so much that you would be willing to go through excruciating pain on my behalf. Help me to love others the way you love me. Let me be a part of bringing about your good world once again like I read in Revelation 21. Amen.*