



# SMALL GROUPS |

# CURRICULUM

SERMON TITLE	DATE
“When Life Is Hard God Has A Much Bigger Perspective” James 1:1-8	November 01, 2015

**Ps 139:7-12** “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and light about me be night,’ even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.”

In this study we will see that even in your worst suffering, yes “even there” the Lord is present and in control and he is for your good!

**What you need:** Bible, Notebook, Pen or pencil or marker

**Read Job 1-2:10**

## I. Suffering Is Real

### A. And It Is Often Unexplainable

**Read the description of Job’s character in Job 1:1;8 and Job 2:3.**

- i) What phrase is repeated 3X?
- ii) What is the assumption of what the life of a man like Job should have looked like?
- iii) Summarize the following: What Job lost in 1:13-19. What happened to Job’s physical body in 2:7-8. His Wife’s response.

**B. Read Isaiah 55:8-9** “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

● **Suffering is often unexplainable, and this is because God’s thoughts and ways are beyond ours. However in the context of Isaiah, v7 tells us that God pardons sinners.**

- i) What is harder to understand... that God allows and controls suffering or that he forgives sinners and did that through the suffering of his Son?
- ii) When you consider your own suffering; Will God cause you to suffer to pay for past sins?
- iii) What difference does your understanding of this make?

## II. God is Always In Control

### **A. Of His Purposes For My Suffering (1:8-12' 1:21b; 2:10)**

**John 9:1-3** “As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

- i) Put yourself in the blind man’s shoes. You might ask for healing, or for God’s will to be done, or simply state that, “God is in control”... these are true statements, but according to John 9 what was God’s purpose in the life of the blindman?
- ii) How does should this knowledge change your attitude toward suffering?

### **III. What Do We Do?...**

#### **A. Glorify The Lord**

**Read Job 1:21**

- i) What two things does Job say God has done?
- ii) Of these two, what is typical for us to bless God for?
- iii) When have you ever blessed God for what he has taken away from you?

#### **B. Guard Your Heart**

**Read Job 1:8 2:3**

● **Job’s suffering and God’s control are hard to understand.**

**In his book “Systematic Theology”, Wayne Grudem addresses this difficulty**

“God did, indeed, cause evil events to come about and evil deeds to be done. But... Scripture nowhere shows God as directly doing anything evil... Moreover, Scripture never blames God for evil or shows God as taking pleasure in evil,”

- i) Read Job’s response to his suffering in Job 1:21-22 and 2:10. Based on Job’s response why do you think a proper understanding of God’s character and control is vital to suffering well?

**D.A. Carson** This is at the end of our day, the ultimate test of our knowledge of God. Is it robust enough that, when faced with excruciating adversity, it may prompt us to lash out with hard questions, but will never permit us to turn away from God?

### **MEMORY VERSE :**

**Job 1:21** “And he said, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

### **ACCOUNTABILITY:**

#### **1. Men/Women:**

- i) If you are suffering, How are dealing with your suffering?
- ii) What can you do this week to minister to someone who is suffering?