

INTRODUCTION: Message - "Pivotal Circumstances" (1 Peter 1:6-7, John 11:1-15)

Everyone experiences ups and downs in their life. Everyone eventually encounters one or more unexpected negative circumstances that will change us on the inside. Our faith will be tested for the express purpose to give glory and honor to God. You may say: "I didn't sign up for this!" However uncomfortable, the reality is that God sees your faith as something precious and He does allow big, bad, and bold circumstances to help it grow and flourish. Did you know this about God?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Read John 9:1-3. The Jews believed that poverty and sickness was often caused by sin, either by the person who is sick/poor OR their parents. Jesus contradicts that notion in these passages. How does this make you feel?
2. Read Exodus 4:10-11. How do you interpret this scripture? Does it make you uncomfortable in your perception of God?
3. Read Job 13:15. Job lost so much... family, wealth, and his health. Yet, Job chose to stick with God unto the end. How do you suppose he was able to come to that position?
4. Read Genesis 50:14-20. Joseph acknowledges that God's hand was in his own circumstances (v20). Have you ever looked back at your own circumstances and came to the same conclusion? Why or why not?
5. Read Romans 8:27-28. How is it possible that ALL things will work out for good?
6. Read John 11:4-6. If Jesus knew Lazarus would die, do you think he also knew the pain and suffering Mary and Martha would endure? Could Jesus have prevented this?

SO WHAT?:

God uses trials and other unexpected negative circumstance to grow your faith. The purpose is to glorify and honor God. We must continue to glorify God and to trust in Him... no matter what comes. This can be very difficult. But God sees your faith as something so important, something more precious than fine gold that He is willing to allow circumstances to grow your faith. Our reaction should always be to run to God for help and strength.

THINK ABOUT IT:

"(2) Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, (3) for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (4) And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (James 1:2-4, English Standard Version, ESV)