



NEW HOPE

SMALL GROUPS

Connect - Engage - Serve

“Why God Allows Adversity, Part 2” Week of March 29th, 2020

Connecting -with your group

1. Thank you for staying connected with your small group during this difficult time. We hope you were able to catch both parts of “Why God Allows Adversity.” You can access the recorded worship set and sermon at NewHopeEastlake.org/watch. We are providing a lot of discussion questions this week. Please don't feel you have to get through all of them. Pick the ones that speak most into your groups and take time with your discussion. You could even break this outline up into multiple meetings if you have the time this week.

Engaging- with the Word of God and others

This week Pastor Russ is continuing our message series on How to Handle Adversity. We will be studying reasons #4-7 on Why God Allows Adversity. To review, reasons #1-3 are: 1) God allows adversity into our lives to get our **attention**; 2) To remind us of His great love, God uses adversity in our lives as a form of **discipline**; 3) God uses adversity to draw our attention to potentially **dangerous** blind spots, habits, or emotional baggage from our past.

1. Pastor Russ shared that God knows your **potential** for His kingdom. He knows what kind of **influence** you could have. Have you ever ‘sat down with God’ and honestly and prayerfully asked Him to reveal your potential and what you should be doing with that potential? What if the answer isn't what you expect? Who are two or three people you could ask about your potential?
2. God has **chosen** you to **represent** Him within your sphere of influence. Take a moment to list out a few names of people in your sphere of influence. How have you represented God within your sphere of influence? What are some examples that you have observed in the way others represent God in your sphere of influence?
3. Read Reason #5 on the message outline: God allows adversity in our lives to cause us to rely on His **strength** instead of our own. How has the coronavirus outbreak impacted your dependence on God? How has your prayer life changed as a result? How has it affected the time you spend reading the Bible?
4. The **greater** the odds, the **better** for God. Read 1 Corinthians 1:27-29.
1 Corinthians 1:27-29 (GN) “²⁷ God purposely chose what the world considers nonsense in order to shame the wise, and He chose what the world considers weak in order to shame the powerful. ²⁸ He chose what the world looks down on and despises and thinks is nothing, in order to destroy what the world thinks is important. ²⁹ This means that no one can boast in God's presence.” (God chooses what world considers weak, doesn't have to, shows His power more)

What are some odds you have faced in the past, and now looking back you can realize that God was actually showing His power during that time? How can we unleash the power of God as Christians during these difficult times?

5. From God's perspective, it was more important for Paul to experience supernatural **power** than it was for him to live a pain-free, adversity-free **life**. Read 1 Corinthians 12:10.
1 Corinthians 12:10 (GN) “I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Your biggest **weakness** is God's greatest **opportunity**. How does that statement make you feel? What do you consider to be your biggest weakness? What would others say is your biggest weakness? Will you commit to ask God to use your biggest weakness as an opportunity to grow?

6. Pastor Russ shared that if our lives are free from pain, turmoil, and sorrow, our knowledge of God will remain purely **academic**. Is your knowledge and relationship with God more academic or personally life changing? If it's more academic, what can you do to change that?
7. God is always **faithful** to His promises, but He does not promise to always work things out the way we **think** they **should be**. Read Psalm 34:4, 6-7, 19.
Psalm 34:4, 6-7, 19 (NCV & GN) "4 I asked the LORD for help, and He answered me. He saved me from all that I feared... 6 The helpless call to Him, and He answers; He saves them from all their troubles. 7 His angel guards those who honor the LORD and rescues them from danger... 19 People who do what is right may have many problems, but the LORD will solve them all."

Do you ever find yourself treating God as a 'genie in a bottle?' What are some things you can do to remain dependent on God during the good times? How can you get better at identifying God is always faithful, even when things don't work out the way you want or think they should?

8. Read Reason #7 on the message outline: God allows adversity in our lives to prepare us to **comfort & encourage** others who are facing similar circumstances. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 6.
2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 6 (NIV & GW) "3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God... 6 Besides, if we suffer, it brings you comfort and salvation. If we are comforted, we can effectively comfort you when you endure the same sufferings that we endure."

How do you take comfort in the adversity God allows in your life? How can you use your adversity to encourage others that are facing similar circumstances?

Serving- your group through prayer and care

Take time to share praises and prayer requests. Commit to praying for each other and checking in on each other throughout the week. Here are some ways we can continue serving others during this time:

- Connect with family, friends, and neighbors regularly to offer words of love and encouragement. Pray with and for them.
- Stay connected with your small groups. Continue to check in on each other's' needs.
- Check in on elderly family, friends and neighbors; especially those that are isolated at this time.
- Offer to help with childcare to parents who have to continue to work outside the home.
- Offer to get groceries or meals for families in need.
- Show kindness, practice patience, and give grace.