

Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

Get Real - Part 2

Scott Pilgrim

Introduction

Jesus experienced immense anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane. He knew that physical pain was imminent. He also endured intense emotional pain, yet He chose to obey God's purpose and will in His life. All of us have experienced pain to varying degrees, for short and sometimes longer periods of time. The journey of pain is real and may tempt us to panic, or dwell in hopelessness and self-pity. Alternatively, we can choose to be in God's presence, allowing Him to hold our hand and finding shelter in the real peace that is only found in Him.

Read

John 5:1-15, Psalm 23

Discuss

1. How have you experienced pain? What was the difference between the onset of that pain and when it finally subsided?
2. Pastor Scott mentioned the various types of pain that all of us may experience in one way or another. Discuss some of them and how they could cause anguish and turmoil. What are some of the challenges they present, and how do you think we could get through them?
3. In John 5, we read that a disabled man had been lying near the pool at Bethesda ('house of mercy') for 38 years. The man believed that he could not be healed, but then Jesus came and told him to stand up, pick up his mat, and walk. At which point did the man practice faith in Jesus? Are there any barriers that could prevent you from reaching out for God's hand?

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4. Pastor Scott outlined three options during our journey of pain: dwell in self-pity; fall into panic; or hold on to God's presence. What would influence you to choose among the three options?
5. Read Psalm 23. God has promised that He is our Shepherd, and He will walk with us through the darkest valley. Share with the group how this psalm could help you through a season of pain. Think of someone who may be going through their darkest valley and ask God to guide you in sharing Psalm 23 with that person.
6. As we go through the reality of pain, there are practical steps we can take:

Pray - Ask for God's help and grace whenever we are in a place of tightness.

Perspective - Take on God's perspective of our situation.

Peace - Reach out for our God's hand so that we can experience real peace.

Share with the group the challenges in applying the above suggestions and discuss how we can encourage each other to work towards them.

Respond

Have you been through a season of pain and God has lifted you up through His faithfulness? This week, ask for God's help to be a vessel of love and to lead you to someone going through a dark valley. Think of one thing you can do to help and pray for this person. Commit to doing it.