

2011 | | WCC  
 Weekly Sermon/Small Group Series  
 1/23/2011

Small Group Leaders Guide

A New Year a New You:  
 A New Perspective on Suffering, Bill Warrick

Time		Questions	Answers
10	<b>Hook</b>	<i>Use this question to engage group members in conversation with an introduction question that helps them get to know each other better.</i>	
	1	If you were to write your own version of a book entitled, Disappointed with God, would it be the length of a poem, an op-ed piece, or a short story or a epic novel.	<b>Open Answer.</b>
10	<b>Book</b>	<i>Use these questions to set the tone for the study and give group members a background in the text you will be studying.</i>	
	2	Review the 4 fold pattern that Jesus has used in the two letters so far. (Bonus points if you can make them rhyme.) Smyrna is one of only two churches that do not receive condemnation. Why do you think that is in light of what we learned about their circumstances?	<b>Introduction, Commendation, Condemnation, Exhortation. (Other terms would be fine too of course.)                  People in the midst of hardships and suffering often do not have ears to hear condemnation or critique. Instead they need comfort and encouragement.</b>
	3	What most impacted you about Shawn Flanagan's testimony of his mother Rose?	<b>Open Answer.</b>
25	<b>Look</b>	<i>Use these questions as entry points into the passage of scripture.</i>	

<p>4 Read Revelation 2:8-11. What are the three hardships that the church in Smyrna is enduring? What are the only two commands God gives his people during these trials? What would the title of First and Last be encouraging to this church? How would the concrete number of 10 days encourage them as well?</p>	<p><b>Trials, Financial poverty, false accusations from others. Do not fear, be faithful. Jesus is before and after all sufferings and trials. 10 days implies God knows when the suffering will end and that they are not forever. (We do not know whether 10 days were literal 10 days or more of a metaphor.)</b></p>
<p>5 Read 2 Corinthians 6:4-11 and 11:16-33. How would you define Paul's perspective on his sufferings?</p>	<p><b>He viewed them as short and momentary in light of eternity.</b></p>
<p>6 Read Romans 5:3-11. What are your thoughts on this passage?</p>	<p><b>Open.</b></p>
<p>7 Read Hebrews 12:4-11. Why does God allow suffering and hardships in our life? What role did suffering play in our salvation?</p>	<p><b>Open.</b></p>
<p>8 Jesus begins each of the letters with the phrase, "I know." What are some of the ways in which we use the phrase "I know (fill in the blank)?" One that is Read Hebrews</p>	<p><b>I know can be used for facts (I know it all), it can indicate learning something that is secret (I know what you did behind my back), it can be used as an empathetic comforting statement, (I know how much it hurts and I am sorry.)</b></p>

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15	<b><u>Took</u></b>	Use these questions to help the group take the meaning and apply it to their lives in tangible ways. Applications can be cognitive (change my thinking), behavioral (change my actions), or emotional (change my feelings). Be sure to turn these applications into prayer requests for the upcoming week as you close the study.	
	10	Bill said, "All of creation is subject to frustration by God's Will for our good and for His glory."	
	11	Job 23:10 "When He has tried me I shall come out as gold." How have you seen God refine and purify you through trials in your life?	<b>Open Answer.</b>
	12		

<b><u>Pray</u></b>	Our Father, Help us to grow our understanding and acceptance of suffering in our lives. Help us to trust You that You will redeem it and cause us to embrace our pain and know Your grace is sufficient. Amen.	
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