

Journey CHURCH

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How to Get Through What You're Going Through Viewer Guide Session 6: Start Seeing – Finding Treasure in Darkness

What We Can Expect from God in Dark Times

1. God has _____ in the darkness of suffering.

But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.
Job 23:10 (NIV)

“Community does not simply happen spontaneously except in rare occurrences when conditions are right. Not even the unique circumstances of catastrophic loss are sufficient to create community. When people suffering loss do find community it comes as a result of conscious choices they and other people make. First of all, it requires a choice on the part of those who want to provide community for suffering friends. They must be willing to be changed by someone by someone else’s loss though they may not have been directly affected by it. Good comfort requires empathy, forces adjustment and sometimes mandates huge sacrifices. Comforters must be prepared to let the pain of another become their own and so let it transform them. They will never be the same after that decision. Their own world will be permanently altered by the presence of one of who suffers. They are changed because they chose to get involved and to allow my suffering to become theirs. They refuse to give me only a month or a year to return to life as it was for me before the loss. Since they knew life would not be the same for me, they decided that it would not be the same for them either.”

From the Book a Grace Disguised by Jerry Sittser

2. God has the _____ in our Darkness.

The high and lofty one who lives in eternity, the Holy One, says this: “I live in the high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble.

Isaiah 57:15a (NLT)

3. God will be _____ in our Darkness.

... So we could seek after God, and not just grope around in the dark but actually find him. He doesn't play hide-and-seek with us. He's not remote; he's near.

Acts 17:27 (MSSG)

What We Know Leads Us _____.

At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.”

Job 1:20-21 (NIV)

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Things You Can Praise God for Even in Pain:

- That he is a good and loving God (Job 10:12)
- That he is all-powerful (Job 36:22; 37:5, 23)
- That he notices every detail of my life. (Job 23:10; 31:4)
 - That he is in control (Job 34:13)
 - That he has a plan for my life (Job 23:14)
 - That he will protect me (Job 5:11)

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 (NIV)

Treasure in the Darkness

Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way.

Psalm 23:4 (TLB)

You light a lamp for me. The Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.

Psalm 18:28 (NLT)

Let the one who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on their God.

Isaiah 50:10b (NIV)

Discussion Questions:

1. Physical darkness can distort our vision, and emotional darkness can distort our perspective. If you have experienced depression, anxiety, or any other mental health issue, even if it was for a season, how did God's Word, and the treasures you found there, give you hope?
2. Often in dark times, we have to dig for the treasures. It takes extra effort, but it also requires support. Who has come alongside you to help you and hold you through a difficult season? Why do you think they made that choice?
3. We like to fix things. We want to get rid of a problem and then move on. Yet to express compassion is a deliberate choice, and we are most like Christ when we choose to offer the gift of our presence and enter into the suffering of others. Share your experiences of "fixing" versus just showing up to comfort someone who is suffering.

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4. The fact that God “summons us by name” reassures us that God will be close to us even in our darkest moments. How does this truth change the way you think about life’s most difficult trials?
5. Look below at Psalm 23:4. This well-known verse teaches us that God is with us even when we’re “walking through the valley of death.” What testimony do you have of God’s presence during a dark time?

Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way.

Psalm 23:4 (TLB)

Putting it into Practice:

Take time this week to reflect on all the ways you can praise God, even if you are going through a dark time. Open your Bible and review the Scriptures that support each truth.

- **He is a good and loving God (Job 10:12)**
- **He is all-powerful (Job 36:22; 37:5, 23)**
- **He notices every detail of my life (Job 23:10; 31:4)**
 - **He is in control (Job 43:13)**
 - **He has a plan for my life (Job 23:14)**
 - **He will protect me (Job 5:11)**

Prayer Direction:

Form groups of two or three, and read the excerpt on page 45 from *A Grace Disguised* by Jerry Sittser again. Pray and ask God to create an abundance of compassion and give you the courage to make the choice to enter into each other’s suffering. Ask him to equip you to become a comforter and accept the transformation that comes with that choice.