



May 17, 2020

Discussion Guide

Face the Issue:

This week, Brian Anderson shared with us moments in scripture when believers may have felt that God had left them or had been late. The truth is we all have moments in our lives when we feel like maybe God is not there. We here in sermons and we sing in songs that God is faithful and He will always be there but we have our doubts.

Think of some dark time in your life. What did you find most helpful?

What was the longest period of time you experienced what seemed to be God's silence? What advice did you receive from others and what was your response to it?

How did your relationship with God change when you were going through a dark time in your life?

Into the Word

Read Genesis 50:20

When Joseph was in prison, he was told two different times that others would speak on his behalf to get him out of there. They forgot, so he continued to sit in prison for a crime he never committed. Think how easy it would have been for Joseph to have thought God had forgotten him. But there is no indication that Joseph felt sorry for himself. He patiently waited to be released from prison in God's time. He was learning many spiritual lessons by the things he was suffering.

Joseph decided against bitterness. It's easy to let the circumstances in our lives determine what kind of people we will become. Some people have gone through horrendous situations and yet you could never tell by looking at them. Instead of lines of bitterness etched on their faces, there are laugh lines. Somewhere along the way they decided to trust God, causing them to grow. Joseph was that kind of person. He said to his brothers, who had purposed to get rid of him, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." Joseph saw God and his purposes as bigger than anything that crossed his path. Joseph saw God as sovereign.

God promises that our faithfulness will bear good fruit. Sometimes the gardening work can be painful and cause us to be patient and joyful in the midst of heartache. He grows us to be loving by surrounding us in unloving circumstances.

Read 1 John 3:2.

Each and every day we all have different experiences. God uses each one to conform us to the image of His Son. Every experience is a tool in the Master's hands; not one is wasted. If we trust in God when it is dark, we will grow.

One of the things that times of doubt and darkness can teach us is how to direct our prayers. They can become less about getting answers and more about connecting with God. Where are you in your prayer life? Do you think God wants to hear our petitions? Why or why not?

What has attributed to your biggest growth spurts?

How would Joseph's life have looked different if he chose not to forgive his brothers? How does our unwillingness to forgive affect our growth?

What valuable lessons have you learned from your dark times? What would you like to see God teach you through such times?

Apply The Word

A. W. Tozer tells us the will of God is the same for all. He has no favorites in his household. What he has ever done for any of his children, he will do for all of his children. The difference lies with us. (The Pursuit of God, Christian Publications, 1993).

What is standing in the way of God being the biggest thing in your life?

What would it look like to actively seek God? Where are you on a scale of 1–10?

What are some obstacles to your being still before God and trusting Him? How does the world work against this?

Who can you think of right now that may be going through a dark time in their walk with God? What could you share with them about the value of our trials?