

PAIN & SUFFERING

A FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP CONVERSATION GUIDE



I know you are hurting right now.

On days like today it's easy to wonder, "If God is good, why did He let something really bad like this happen?"

Right now, you likely feel lots of different feelings. You may feel a sadness deeper and wider than the largest ocean. Or maybe you feel anger that threatens to spurt out of you like lava from a mighty volcano. Perhaps you feel fear, like a shadow about to be swallowed by a setting sun. It's even possible you feel all of these feelings, and more. What are you feeling right now?

(Take a moment for your child to share their feelings with you.)

Ever since Adam and Eve sinned, people have lived in a world where sin affects everything. Sin separates us from God. Sin changes the way we think, the words we speak and even the things we do. Because of people's sin, we see anger, hurt, sadness and evil around us. Sin causes broken relationships, sickness, suffering and even death.



God does not cause sin.

He created a perfect world where sin did not exist. But He also gave humans free will. He wanted us to choose to love Him and follow Him. Sadly, Adam and Eve chose to sin, and all of humanity has dealt with the consequences since that day.

The Bible doesn't say our lives will be easy when we follow Jesus. In fact, Jesus told His disciples in John 16:33 they would have trouble. They had times they were sad, felt lonely and felt like everyone was against them. But the Bible has some good news for us!

Let's read what the Apostle Paul tells us about God. **Can you help me find Romans 8, verses 31-34? The book of Romans is in the New Testament.**

WHAT THEN SHALL WE SAY TO THESE THINGS? IF GOD IS FOR US, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US? HE WHO DID NOT SPARE HIS OWN SON BUT GAVE HIM UP FOR US ALL, HOW WILL HE NOT ALSO WITH HIM GRACIOUSLY GIVE US ALL THINGS? WHO SHALL BRING ANY CHARGE AGAINST GOD'S ELECT? IT IS GOD WHO JUSTIFIES. WHO IS TO CONDEMN? CHRIST JESUS IS THE ONE WHO DIED—MORE THAN THAT, WHO WAS RAISED—WHO IS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, WHO INDEED IS INTERCEDING FOR US.

(Romans 8:31-34)



What does it mean that God is for us?

God did everything needed to be done for us to have a relationship with Him. He gave His very own Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for us and our sins. When we receive by faith Jesus' gift of salvation, there is nothing that can separate us from God's love. There is no grief, trouble, hard time, bully or hatred that can make a wall between God and us.

When life is hard, things don't go our way, or we feel left out and lonely, God promised He would be with us. He knows we will struggle, and He is with us wherever we are and whatever we are going through.

When we are sad because we lost a close friend or family member, God is with us.
When we feel like we don't fit in, God is with us.
When we can't do what our friends do, God is with us.
When we are left out by friends, God is with us.

While we know suffering exists on Earth because of sin, sometimes we don't know why people get hurt. He knows your pain and how much you hurt. **He knows every detail of what is going on in your life and loves you more than you can imagine.**

MORE TO EXPLORE

What do I do when I don't feel like God is with me or loves me?

There are times you may feel like God is far away. Try reading your Bible, talking with God or journaling. Sometimes the things we watch (live movies or social media) or listen to can affect how we feel too. Remember, if you are a child of God, He is always with you! But sometimes we need to turn off distractions and spend time with Him!

Journal

Psalm 62:8 says: *Trust in [God] at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.* David was facing serious trouble, and yet he knew God was a safe place to pour out his heart. Write an honest prayer to God, pouring out your heart and your feelings to Him.

Is it wrong to feel sad or angry right now?

Grieving is not wrong; it's a way we can express the pain we feel inside. Sometimes that looks like crying. Other times it looks like quietly holding your mom or dad's hand. It may even look like writing a poem or prayer to God about the hurt you are experiencing. **How are you grieving today?**

We can also weep with those who are weeping (Romans 12:15). When we see or hear things that make us sad, it's OK to cry. Psalm 147:3 says: *He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.* Let's take time to call out to God and pray for the hurting families. **Take a moment to pray for the people hurt today.**

Read

Read Ephesians 1:3-6 and John 1:12-13. Be encouraged God chose you before the foundation of the world. When you trust Jesus as your Savior, God accepts you as His son or daughter. He loves you with a love that can never be taken from you.

ACTIVITIES

Pray

Dear God, thank You that You are with us always, even when we are lonely or hurting. Help us to remember how much You love us and that nothing can separate us from You and Your love. Amen

Sing

Listen to this playlist throughout the series as you learn that God loves us and is with us.



Scan here to listen wherever you are!

Family Playdate

One way God reminds us He is for us and loves us is by giving us a family. Spend time together playing or having a dance party as a family. At some point during your play, take a minute and tell your children that your family is a safe space for them when life is hard. Pray and thank God for giving you each other.

Memorize

**WHAT THEN
SHALL WE SAY
TO THESE
THINGS? IF
GOD IS FOR US,
WHO CAN BE
AGAINST US?**

(Romans 8:31)

Watch



Dive deeper into Scripture memory with your kids by singing along to this Memory Melody video.

Share

Tell your child about a hard time when you needed God to remind you He was with you. How did knowing God loved you help you get through that hard time?

Scrambled Eggs

Let your child separate an egg, putting the yolk in one bowl and the white in another. What does the white look like? How is the yolk different? Have your child pour the yolk into the white and whisk them together. Can you tell the white from the yolk? You can no longer separate the whites from the yolks. Tell your child once we accept Jesus as our Savior, nothing can separate us from God's love. Cook up the eggs with your child and enjoy!

Work of Art

Let your child draw or paint a picture of themselves in a place where they may feel lonely or have a hard time. Somewhere on the paper write, "Nothing Can Separate Me from God!" Hang the art in the house where it can remind your family God loves you and is with you wherever you are.

Hide and Seek

Play Hide and Seek with your child. After a few rounds, tell your child that if they have accepted Jesus as their Savior, there is nothing that can separate them from God. They don't have to go looking for God because He is already with them and is found in the Bible and through prayer.