

When life gets HARD!

Five ways God brings **meaning**

Session 1: When Life Gets Hard, God Brings Meaning

February 4-9, 2018

Hangout (30 Minutes)

1. Briefly share your name and every town* where you have lived.
2. Go over life group agreement and calendar.
3. Use the book "The Complete Book of Questions" for a fun way to get to know each other. Go around your circle having each person pick a number, look up the question for that number and encourage everyone to answer. The higher the number the deeper the question. Remember, everyone has the right to pass on any question if they aren't ready to answer.

*Brad Walsh, please limit your answer to five.

Watch the Video (24 Minutes)

Watch the video if necessary. If everyone viewed the sermon before the meeting, add this time to your discussion.

Discuss (30 Minutes)

It's okay if you don't get to every question. We encourage groups to at least answer questions 1 and 6.

1. Pastor Steve described **Three False Pits** that work to stunt our recovery process when life gets hard. How have you seen these in action?
 - Personalization is the mindset that I am at fault for my loss and suffering.
 - Permanence is the mindset that the aftershocks of a hard event will last forever.
 - Pervasiveness is the mindset that a hard event will affect all areas of my life.
2. Part of the story of Job was used to describe **The False Pit of Personalization**.

"Consider now: Who, being innocent, has ever perished? Where were the upright ever destroyed? As I have observed, those who plow evil and those who sow trouble reap it. Job 4:7-8

 - How do you imagine Job heard these words from his friend, Eliphaz?

3. Psalm 13 was used to describe **The False Pit of Permanence.**

¹ How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? ² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Psalm 13:1-2

- How do you think these Bible verses describe well the false pit of permanence?

4. Psalm 13 was also used to describe **The False Pit of Pervasiveness.**

³ Look on me and answer, LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, ⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall. Psalm 13:3-4

- From your experience, how do these verses express what pervasiveness is like?

5. Psalm 13 concludes with a dramatic change.

⁵ But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. ⁶ I will sing the LORD's praise, for he has been good to me. Psalm 13:5-6

- Do you think such a change is really possible when you have experienced significant loss or suffering in your life? Explain your answer.

6. Pastor Steve said that when God brings meaning we begin to have three experiences. Which of these is most important to you and why?

- We move more effectively to take the steps through the grief process (recovery).
- We become more resilient in the face of our trials.
- We begin taking back joy.

Summary

When life gets hard, we are likely to experience being in one or more of the *False Pits of Personalization, Permanence, or Pervasiveness*. While they seem very real to us, these are "False Pits" because they are not the truthful and real experience that God has for us. As God brings meaning to our suffering and loss, we begin to see that we are taking steps towards recovery on a level path. God is helping us to take steps through the grief process, build resiliency, and take back the joy of living.

These are the five ways that God brings meaning that will be taught in upcoming sermons.

- February 11 - When Life Gets Hard God Brings Personal Strength
- February 18 - When Life Gets Hard God Brings Greater Appreciation
- February 25 - When Life Gets Hard God Brings Deeper Relationships
- March 4 - When Life Gets Hard God Brings More Meaning in Life
- March 11 - When Life Gets Hard God Brings New Possibilities

Pray (5 Minutes)

The Apostle Paul instructs us to "Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Romans 12:12

Recite this prayer together: Gracious Lord, thank you for bringing meaning when my life gets hard. Let me not be discouraged. Instead, let me trust in you to move me through the false pits of personalization, permanence, and pervasiveness. Renew my hope. Restore my joy. Give me patience and resilience in suffering. Help me persevere in prayer. All glory be to you, my Savior. Amen.