



## Sermon-Based Discussion Guide for Home Groups

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# God's Provision, my suffering

## Series: Big God

January 30, 2011

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### SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 4:12-19 (NIV)

<sup>12</sup> Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup> If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. <sup>15</sup> If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. <sup>16</sup> However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. <sup>17</sup> For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup> And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

<sup>19</sup> So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

### ENGAGE

Have you ever seen someone suffer for doing the right thing? Have you ever suffered for being a believer?

### DISCUSS

1. Read the passage above. Have everyone open their Bible and read it silently. Ask members to share one way this verse encourages us.
2. Is this statement true.... "Suffering is normal, so don't be surprised?" Why or why not? If it is true, what are the implications of how we learn to deal with suffering?

3. In what ways should suffering result in worship? What attitude does it reveal when we are able to do so?
4. Are we ashamed to be associated with Jesus in any way?
5. Read aloud Matthew 5:10-12. What does this verse teach us about persecution? What kind of rewards do you think we'll have in heaven?
6. If the purpose for suffering is for purification, not punishment, how does that change our attitude about suffering when it comes? Suffering is to bring us back to God.
7. In what ways can suffering reveal our idols? (An idol is anything that we love or trust more than God.) What are some common idols in our culture? among believers?
8. There are three ways to respond to God in suffering: 1) rejection, 2) envy of other, or 3) trust. Which way do we most often respond to suffering?

## YOUR NEXT STEP

Decide in advance how we are going to respond to persecution. Discuss when and where it will likely come and what our response plan is.

## CHILDREN'S TIME

1. Overview the passage for children. Explain that today we'll be talking about how we can expect to suffer as believers.
2. If possible, share a story of persecution.org about someone overseas who is persecuted. Lead the children in a prayer for this person.
3. Ask children what is most difficult when people laugh at us. One day we'll be laughed at for being a Christ follower. Ask why people make fun of others. Help them see that the person who makes fun usually feels bad about themselves.
4. Talk about the rewards in heaven we'll have for having faced persecution.
5. What does Jesus want us to do when we are persecuted for Him?

## OTHER PASSAGES

1 John 3:13 "Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you."

John 15:18 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first."

2 Tim. 3:12 "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."