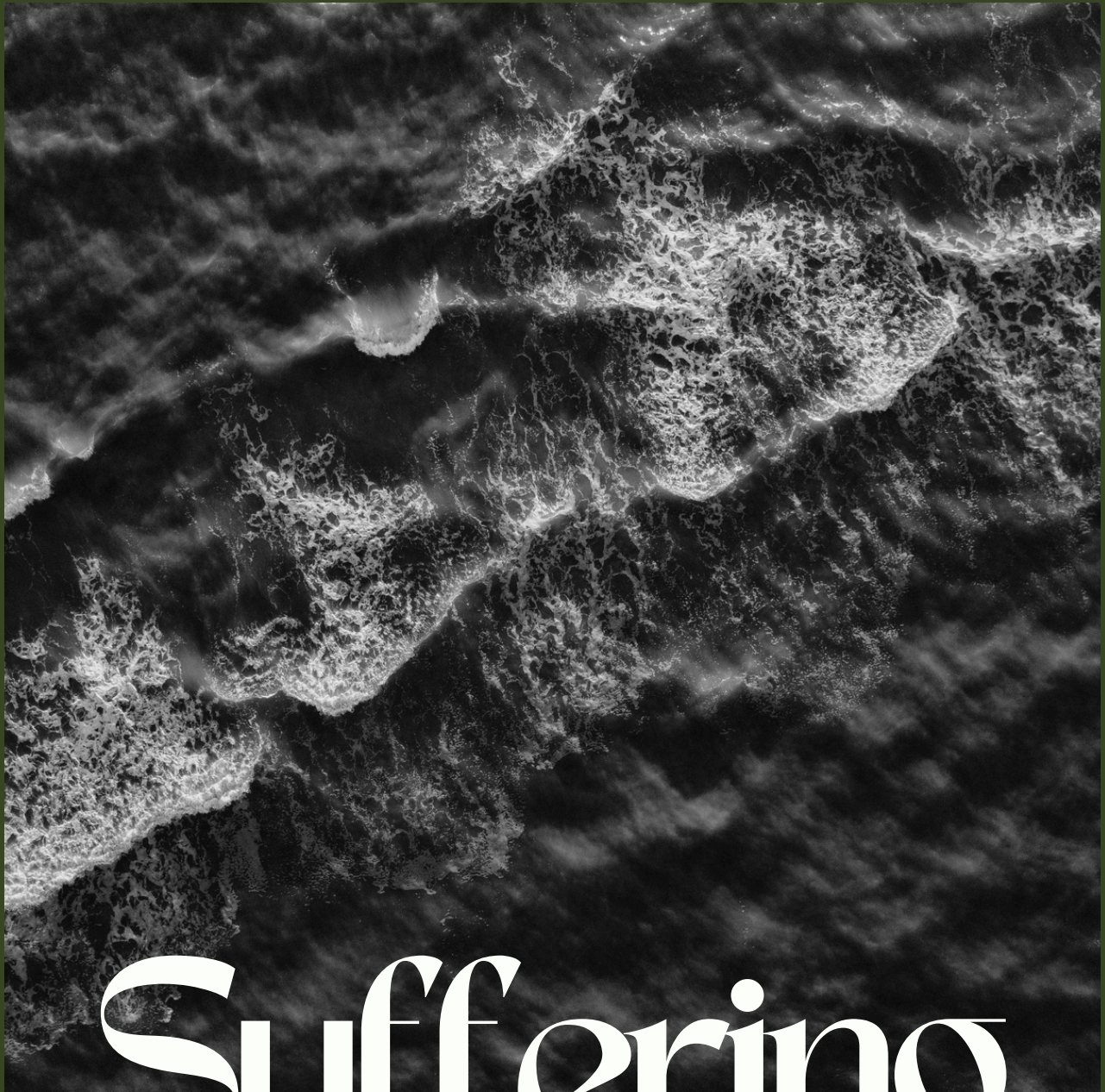


THE GOODNESS OF GOD

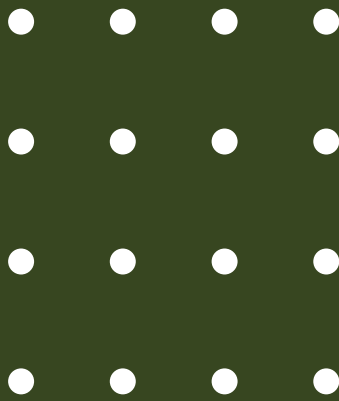
VISION 2024



# Suffering

A STUDY AND PRACTICE GUIDE  
FOR HOMEGROUPS

*generations*  
church leipzig



# *Week 3*

HOMEGROUP RESOURCES

# Why do we suffer?

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## Prayer

*Loving Father, we want to come humbly tonight, asking hard questions, but doing so with trust in your character and your heart for us. Prepare our minds for your answers.*

*Jesus, you understand suffering better than anyone else. Help us to remember that you chose to suffer because of your great love for us.*

*Holy Spirit, would you guide our conversations and our prayers for ourselves and for each other tonight? Teach us how to pray, even about this difficult subject.*



# Discussion

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- Think of some time in your life when you really suffered. Now, recognizing we will not have definite answers regarding why we suffered before we get to see Jesus face to face and ask him, can you imagine why it took place? Was there value to it in the long term?
- Did you see any positive outcomes while you were experiencing the suffering? Would it have helped if you did?

**Read together Romans 8:18–39**



# Read together

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And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Romans 8:28–30 (NIV)

# Group questions

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According to this passage, why do we suffer?

Considering the phrase, “for the good of those who love him” in Romans 12:28, many people get frustrated trying to see how the horrible things which happened to them are for their good. However, it’s important to note that this verse uses the plural form of “those who love him”. It means that all things happen for the good of the Body of Christ. It is not teaching that every single thing that happens is for the good of each individual.

Does that knowledge impact your understanding of this verse?

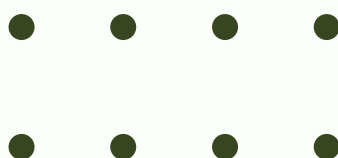


# Group Questions

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Does it help you to see that your most difficult experiences better prepare you to serve others? How? The ultimate goal of our lives is for us to know God, and to become more like Christ. Christ's suffering, not just on the cross but even suffering under temptations, formed his character. (Hebrews 2:18 says, "For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."), This passage addresses the difficult process of allowing suffering to refine us into the image of Christ. Being conformed to the image of Christ requires us to be ready to be treated like him, and ready to change our responses to suffering.

Do these truths help you to embrace times of suffering with a new attitude?



# The Practice

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The scriptures talk about being transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2). One of the hardest practices of our faith is intentionally training our thought processes, especially while we are suffering. But when things are hard, it just means we need to invite the Holy Spirit into the process with us. And often it's a help to invite our brothers and sisters in Christ to process our pain with us.

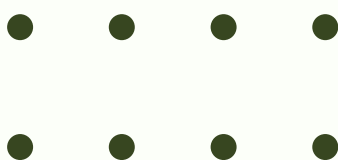
Spend some time letting the Word of God transform your viewpoint on your times of suffering. Invite the Holy Spirit into the process. Discuss your ideas with a friend in the group. First pray, then search out any lies you may have believed about why God may have allowed you to suffer in the past. (Warning: This could be an emotional process. That's ok). If you find any lies you have believed, confess them to each other, and speak out God's forgiveness over each other.



# Day One

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- **Read John 9:1–12**
- **Journal:** God is given many titles in Scripture, one of them is “the wonderful counselor” (Isaiah 9:6). Take time to write and honestly talk to God about your own experiences of suffering.
- Ask him why they might have happened?
- Ask God how can he redeem what happened?



# Day two

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Our suffering is never pointless. Sometimes it's caused by external forces, and we have a chance to shine despite our circumstances. However, sometimes suffering is sadly the result of our own poor decisions or times of rebellion against God. And because God loves us, he corrects us.

- Read Hebrews 12:6–7, then take some time to brainstorm and pray.
- How has God used your times of suffering to give you chances to become more like him?



# Day three

Read John 15:18–25

The persecution of Christians is a reality around the world. Jesus was clear, “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.” The fact is that we live in a broken world. Though suffering is often caused by evil forces and evil people, our responses are not defined by our circumstances. Our responses should still be based on God’s love.. Corrie Ten Boom is a great example of someone who learned to stay close to God in the darkest times.

- Check out a short introductory video about her life. Let her life inspire you.
- Consider making a list of people you know who are being persecuted, and take time to pray for them, then find a way to encourage them.



# Day Four

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## Pray for those who are suffering:

We do not usually have definitive answers about why we or others suffer. Regardless, we can show love and bring hope to others in their hard times. One of the best ways we can love others is to pray for them:

- Pray for persecuted believers.
- Pray for those who are suffering because of a sickness.
- Pray for those who are suffering as a result of their own sin and need to repent.
- Pray for those whose suffering is more intense because they cannot understand how God could allow or use their situation for their good or the good of God's kingdom.
- Pray for yourself, that you would grow in mercy to stand by those who are suffering.

# Group Questions

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1

How might this practice help you grow personally?

2

What might be difficult for you to do?

3

Pray for each other in your group.





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