



Group Session

Small Group Study

Volume Overview

How does God help me overcome?

For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)

Because of God's strength in them, many people we read about in the Bible were able to overcome difficulties. In the same way, God can help us overcome challenges in our life, regardless of what we face. Why is it important for us to know that Jesus gives us strength in our everyday

life? How does God help us deal with the hard situations we face? How do we handle temptation? What do we do when we feel alone? These are a few issues we'll look at in this volume.

You Will Need

- Carton of raw eggs, one egg per group of four or five students
- Duct tape or similar
- Stool or chair for the leader to stand on
- Tarp or sheet to catch any broken eggs (or do this activity outside)
- Packing or disposable supplies such as cardboard, packing peanuts, disposable plates or bowls, fabric, newspaper, etc.
- Smartphone, clock, or watch for a timer

Getting Ready

- Choose a location to do an egg drop activity. If the location permits, set up a tarp or sheet with a chair in the center before this session begins.
- First time leading Learn for Youth? Look here for the Facilitator Guide.

To access the Bible Engagement Project library from a computer, visit App.BibleEngagementProject.com.

Engage

Welcome

Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming.

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QUESTION

What's a crazy, fun dream you've had that you'd like to share with the group?

Opening Prayer

Prayer thoughts: Thank God for each of the students who came today. Ask Him to direct your time together in a special way. Express thanks for the freedom to read and study God's Word. Ask God for the Holy Spirit to provide special insight as you dive into Scripture together.

Introduction

Today, we'll be talking about how God can help us overcome when we face difficulty and suffering. Life can be hard—even painful at times. Today we'll see how God gives His people strength to overcome. Let's learn about this truth together!

Group Activity

Protect Your Egg

You Will Need

- *Carton of raw eggs, one egg per group of 4–5 students*
- *Duct tape or similar*
- *Stool or chair for the leader to stand on*
- *Tarp or sheet to catch any broken eggs (or do this activity outside)*
- *Packing or disposable supplies such as cardboard, packing peanuts, disposable plates or bowls, fabric, newspaper, etc.*
- *Smartphone, clock, or watch for a timer*

Getting Ready

- *Choose a location to do an egg drop activity. If the location permits, set up a tarp or sheet with a chair in the center before this session begins.*

Let's start with a fun challenge! For this activity, you'll be a part of a team. Each team will get a raw egg. You'll have four minutes to build a protective structure with the materials I've provided. The goal is to keep your raw egg from breaking when I drop it to the ground. So, build your structure to allow the egg to land safely intact.

- *Set your timer, and give the groups four minutes to complete their structures.*
- *When time is up, call on the groups to bring you the eggs.*
- *Stand on the chair, and drop the eggs one by one onto the tarp.*
- *Declare the winner or winners.*

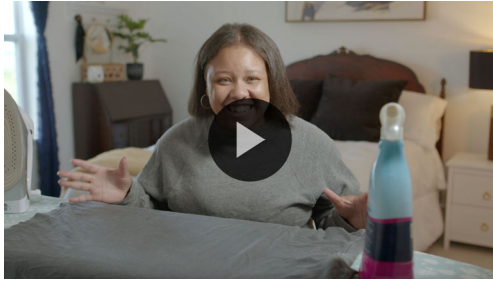
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QUESTION

What kind of materials seemed to work the best for protecting the eggs?

Sometimes when we go through a difficult time, it may feel like we're being dropped just like these eggs. You and I may wonder if God is aware of our situation. Will He protect us in our suffering? Is there purpose in the suffering? We hear God has a perfect plan for our life. But how do suffering and difficulty play into His plan? Let's consider all of these questions as we watch the video.

Watch



Consider What the Bible Says

Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.

Today, we'll look at a story in the first book in the Bible: Genesis. The story tells about when God was with a young man named Joseph through a difficult time of suffering.

God's Plan Doesn't Always Prevent Suffering

God often prepares us for difficult times, even if we don't initially recognize it. Though God doesn't cause the bad things we may face, He does strengthen us through them.

Read Genesis 37:1–11.

Joseph was already disliked by his brothers for being his dad's favorite kid. Then God gave Joseph dreams that showed big things for his future. These dreams made his brothers very jealous of him.

QUESTION

What gift did Joseph's father give him?

QUESTION

Who did Joseph share his dreams with?

QUESTION

Do you think it was wise for Joseph to share his dreams with his older brothers? Why or why not?

QUESTION

Explain a time you shared something with others that you later regretted saying.

Joseph's brothers hated him all the more for the dreams he told them about. Plus, they were jealous of the attention Joseph received from his dad. This led to some additional suffering.

QUESTION

Have you ever been jealous because someone received something you wished you had? How did it affect you?

QUESTION

Why do you think God allows us to go through tough situations?

QUESTION

Has anyone ever gone through a painful situation that you felt would have gotten much worse if God had not been with you? What happened?

God Is with Us When We Suffer

Sometimes we bring on our own suffering in our life. It's possible that this happened when Joseph shared his dreams with his brothers. Other times, suffering happens to us regardless of what we do.

Read Genesis 37:18–28.

Joseph was sold into slavery by his own family. That's an extremely difficult situation for anyone to be in. And as bad as that is, it was a kind alternative compared to their first plans.

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QUESTION

What were some ideas that his brothers considered to get rid of Joseph?

Just a reminder. Don't try any of these at home, no matter how frustrated you get with your family!

QUESTION

Do you think that Joseph's brothers would have plotted to harm him if he hadn't shared his dreams with them? Why or why not?

QUESTION

How do you think Joseph felt after being sold into slavery by his own brothers?

Did You Know?

When Joseph was sold by his brothers, the individuals that he was sold to are identified as a group of Midianites and Ishmaelites. Ancient audiences would have immediately remembered that these groups were relatives of Joseph and his family. The Midianites were the descendants of Midian, one of the sons of Abraham and Keturah, his wife after Sarah died. The Ishmaelites were the descendant of Ishmael, the son of Abraham through

his Egyptian slave Hagar. Both of these men were half-brothers of Isaac, who was Joseph's grandfather. Therefore, Joseph's betrayal ran deeper than just his immediate family. Whether they knew it or not, it included his cousins as well.

QUESTION

Have you ever been betrayed by someone close to you? What happened?

- *This may prove to be a moment for ministry to take place. Don't hesitate to stop the discussion if you need to pray with a student.*

Even though he probably felt angry and very lonely, Joseph wasn't alone. God was with him. While Joseph was experiencing a hard time, God's plan was still in motion.

Those Who Love Us Suffer When We Suffer

At times, we can feel completely isolated when experiencing hard times. The truth is, others may be hurting with us even if we don't know it.

Read Genesis 37:29–36.

QUESTION

How do you think Joseph's father felt when he was given Joseph's robe?

QUESTION

Have you ever been in a situation when you felt God and others had forgotten you? What happened?

QUESTION

How might our view of God affect our view of suffering?

Often, the more we believe God is with us, the more we realize He protects us and helps us when we're suffering. Unfortunately, many people let the opposite happen—allowing their suffering to skew their view of God. Though it's tempting to question God in our moments of suffering, it's these moments that give us some of the greatest opportunities to build our trust in Him.

QUESTION

What advice would you give to someone going through a tough time?

QUESTION

What are some ways we can grow when facing difficulty?

Reflect

God Helps Me with Suffering

God doesn't waste suffering. Sometimes bad things happen to us and to those around us, but God never leaves us. He gives us the strength needed to overcome. And even if things work out for the worst in this world, God has the power to help us overcome through eternal life with Him! God is bigger than anything we face, no matter how big the situation may feel. While God may not cause our suffering, He uses it to shape our life. Pain and suffering are never fun, but God can use them to shape us into the person we were created to be.

Listen to God

Let's take time to consider how our life demonstrates a real trust in the Bible. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. Sharing your responses with the group is completely voluntary.

- *Pause for a few moments of silent reflection before asking students if they want to share.*

QUESTION

What's the toughest thing you're facing right now?

QUESTION

How do you think God may be using that difficulty to help you grow?

Activate

As you reflect on what we learned today, ask God for the Holy Spirit to remind you of His presence when bad things happen. God's love for us never changes, even when we're hurting. God hurts when we hurt. His promise for us is that He never leaves us. Just as God helps us in hard times, we can help others in their own hard times too.

Support from others is also very helpful during suffering. Most likely, each of us has something we're facing right now that's challenging. Let's get in groups of two to three people to pray for and encourage each other. Let the others in your group know you're here to support them.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your steadfast presence in our life. You never leave us. Your promises are true, and nothing can stop them from being fulfilled. I pray that You would give us strength to walk through suffering when it happens. I pray for Your peace in every area of each one's life. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Salvation Opportunity

Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.

God cares about you and what's going on in your life. He wants to help you get through even the toughest situations. He wants to do that through a relationship with you. Just like the dropped egg, He wants to ensure you make it through life without cracking from pressure. This begins by surrendering to Him as your personal Lord and Savior.

Is there anyone here that we can pray for who doesn't have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?

Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond, and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as we close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.

Conclusion

Life can be very hard, but the truth is that God is bigger than anything we face. He is with us through His Holy Spirit within us. We may be tempted to believe that God's plan has been interrupted when we walk through hardship. But He uses suffering to make us into who He is calling us to be. Walking with God, as Joseph did, lets Him help us overcome!

Don't forget to jump into the personal devotions provided for you on the Bible Engagement Project app. These allow you to spend time in God's Word and continue growing in your relationship with Him. I look forward to our time together next time as we continue overcoming with God's help!