

THE LIFE CHALLENGE

CONNECT

What is your usual response to suffering and trials? Do you ignore it the best you can, or get angry and fight back? Do you seek to put a positive spin on it or does it make you freeze? Share your response to suffering and trials with the group.

IDENTITY

Why is suffering a part of Jesus' life on earth? Look at Luke 9:22 as the purpose of Jesus coming to earth. Do you find this a strange strategy from God for his Son to be rejected and killed? If we are to model Jesus, what do we learn from him about our own suffering and trials? Do you believe that God can provide a way out of our suffering? Have you ever connected Jesus overcoming death and suffering to how God calls his disciples to walk through suffering & trials? What is the connection between verses 22 and taking up our cross in verse 23?

THE EXAMEN

Do you have a robust understanding of grief and suffering to walk through it? Or do you revert back to the one way you usually address suffering? What is the opportunity presented in suffering and trials? What skills or attitude changes are needed to look at a season of suffering as an opportunity to see more of God? Can you identify anything in your life you need to 'unlearn' in your approach to suffering, so that you can embrace new ways of learning?

PRACTICE

In Gal 2:20 it says, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." What is an area in your life you may have been holding onto to protect yourself in suffering or trials? What holds power in your heart that you may want to surrender to Jesus?

PRAY TOGETHER

IDEA: Pray together, but have anyone who prays out loud to start their prayer with the prayer below, then go into the specifics:

Dwell on this prayer (Inspired by Philippians 3:8-11)

Jesus, help me count everything as loss compared to the joy of knowing you as Savior. Show me how to surrender anything worthless that holds power in my heart. Increase my love for you. Reveal yourself to me in your sacrificial, resurrecting love.