

SUFFICIENT GRACE

MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU, FOR MY POWER IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.

SIX WEEK **LIFE GROUP** STUDY GUIDE



 GRACE ROAD
CHURCH



WEEK ONE GOD'S POWER IN HUMAN LIMITATIONS

*The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.
Esther 2:17 (ESV)*

DON'T LET HUMAN LIMITATIONS LIMIT YOUR VISION

Esther had several limitations. She was an adopted orphan; she was a minority, a Jew living in Persia; and she happened to be a single woman living in an extremely male-dominated society. Yet, Esther was used to save the Jewish people, and became a great hero.

Esther also had many strengths. She was incredibly beautiful, smart, and had a great personality. When the king became angry with his wife and divorced her, he set out to find the most beautiful virgin in the land to become the new queen. He was smitten by Esther and made her the new queen, but didn't know she was a Jewish person.

When news spread that the king planned to have all the Jewish people killed, Esther knew she could stop the massacre by telling the king she was a Jew. She stepped forward with great courage and was used by God to bring deliverance.

GOD USES OUR LIMITATIONS AS STRENGTHS

The story of Esther shows how God used every limitation in her life to bring about a mighty deliverance. The very areas she could have been discouraged about were turned into necessary strengths needed to accomplish God's plan.

Last week's sermon highlighted several areas of human limitation; sleep, exhaustion, lack of understanding, not enough time, insufficient resources, and inadequate abilities.

TALK ABOUT IT TOGETHER

Do you have limitations that seem to threaten God's vision for you?

Have you ever felt discouraged because of your limitations?

Why do you think God created you with certain limitations?

Do you believe God can use you mightily, despite your limitations?



WEEK TWO GOD'S POWER WHEN YOU'RE INSULTED

People will insult you and hurt you. They will lie and say all kinds of evil things about you because you follow me. But when they do, you will be blessed. Rejoice and be glad, because you have a great reward waiting for you in heaven. People did the same evil things to the prophets who lived before you. Matthew 5:11-12

EVERY INSULT SPOKEN AGAINST YOU IS A BLESSING

Jesus was not exempt from insults. To the contrary, he was repeatedly mocked by spiritual leaders and unbelievers alike. As a follower of Christ, you too will be insulted for your faith. In the gospels, Jesus endured three phases leading to the crucifixion, which resulted in different categories of insults.

1) INSULTED AS A PROPHET

The men who were guarding Jesus began making fun of him and beating him. They blindfolded him and said, "Prove that you are a prophet, and tell us who hit you." They said many cruel things to Jesus. Luke 22:63-65

Why do you think the enemy insults the prophetic voice of God? Have you experienced an attack against the dreams God has placed in your heart?

2) INSULTED AS A KING

The governor's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's palace, and they all gathered around him. They took off his clothes and put a red robe on him. Using thorny branches, they made a crown, put it on his head, and put a stick in his right hand. Then the soldiers bowed before Jesus and made fun

of him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Matthew 27:27-29

Why do you think the enemy attempts to confuse people's identity? Have you experienced an attack against your position in Christ?

3) INSULTED AS A SAVIOR

People walked by and insulted Jesus and shook their heads, saying, "You said you could destroy the Temple and build it again in three days. So save yourself! Come down from that cross!" The leading priests and the teachers of the law were also making fun of Jesus. They said to each other, "He saved other people, but he can't save himself. Mark 15:29-31

Why do you think the enemy belittles the power of the cross? Have you experienced an attack against God's power of salvation working your life?

GOD'S SUFFICIENT GRACE

My friends, do not be surprised at the terrible trouble which now comes to test you. Do not think that something strange is happening to you. But be happy that you are sharing in Christ's sufferings so that you will be happy and full of joy when Christ comes again in glory. When people insult you because you follow Christ, you are blessed, because the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God, is with you. 1 Peter 4:12-14

Why does the writer say we should be happy when we share in Christ's sufferings? How are we blessed when we are insulted for our faith?



WEEK THREE GOD'S POWER DURING HARDSHIPS

*And the Lord said to Moses, “Has the Lord’s arm been shortened? Now you shall see whether what I say will happen to you or not.”
Numbers 11:26*

MOSES FACED A CHALLENGING HARDSHIP

Nobody wants to face a crisis situation, but they do happen. Moses was faced by millions of Israelites who were complained about their food. He went through a variety of emotions often experienced by believers today. Discuss with the group times when you have felt like Moses during a crisis.

1) DISILLUSIONMENT

Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people on me?

2) FRUSTRATION

Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them, that You should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a guardian carries a nursing child,’ to the land which You swore to their fathers?

3) POWERLESSNESS

Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’ I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me.

4) RESIGNATION

If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now—if I have found favor in Your sight—and do not let me see my wretchedness!

5) DOUBT

And Moses said, “The people whom I am among are six hundred thousand men on foot; yet You have said, ‘I will give them meat, that they may eat for a whole month.’ Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to provide enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to provide enough for them?”

FINAL STAGE: GOD’S POWER

And the Lord said to Moses, “Has the Lord’s arm been shortened? Now you shall see whether what I say will happen to you or not.”

DISCUSS THE HEBREW WORDS

Anágke: necessity; a compelling need requiring immediate action, i.e. in a pressing situation. It comes from the same root word angkos, “an uplifted arm poised to meet a pressing need.”

What does it mean to you that “hardship” comes from the same Hebrew word meaning “an uplifted arm posed to meet a pressing need?”

The bible frequently references the “Arm of God.” What does that mean?

Do you believe that every hardship, despite its severity, falls within the sovereignty of God’s knowledge and power?



WEEK FOUR OPPOSITION TO GOD'S PLAN

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
Ephesians 6:12

NEHEMIAH FACED GREAT OPPOSITION

Nehemiah had an important call on his life. When it came time to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem the enemy didn't like what was happening. Nehemiah chapter four shows how God's people faced incredible opposition each step of the way. The enemy uses the same tactics to discourage and stop God's plan in your life.

First, you will hear dissenting voices, and even mockery, about what God has called you to do. Next, you will hear threatening words designed to intimidate you to back down. Finally, the enemy will bring a full blown assault that is meant to stop the progress you're making. Believers are called to face opposition boldly by standing in faith. Attacks from the enemy are ultimately against God, and He will fight your battles.

1) MOCKERY

Nehemiah 4:2-3 And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—stones that are burned?" Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall."

How did Nehemiah specifically respond to the words of mockery?

2) INTIMIDATION

Nehemiah 4:7-8 Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion.

Nehemiah kept going despite the threats. What tangible step did he take in response to the enemy? What steps can believers take today?

3) SURPRISE ATTACK

Nehemiah 4:11 And our adversaries said, "They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease."

God's people often face surprise attacks. What is God looking for in His people in light of this type of opposition?

BUILD AND FIGHT

Nehemiah 4:17 Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon.

Nehemiah completed the wall by charging his people to build with one hand and fight with the other. Does this apply to your life today? If so, how?



WEEK FIVE HOW TO RESPOND TO PAIN

GOD'S PLAN BEHIND DISTRESSING SEASONS

Life is not always easy. We will experience seasons that are painful. The question is, where is God in these situations? What does it all mean? How are we supposed to respond? Scripture provides incredible insight that will change your mindset and encourage you along the way.

PURPOSE OF PAIN

James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

What does "count it all joy" mean? What are believers supposed to be joyful about in the midst of distressing seasons?

PERSPECTIVE ABOUT PAIN

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Why should we not lose heart during afflictions? On what basis does Paul state that our afflictions are light? What is the eternal weight of glory?

POSTURE DURING PAIN

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who

for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

What does it mean to look unto Jesus during seasons of pain? What posture did Jesus maintain during his suffering? How can believers "despise the shame" that comes with persecution?

PROMISE AFTER PAIN

Job 42:10 And the Lord restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

What did Job do before God restored his losses and why is what he did important? Even though Job lost so much, God gave him twice as much as he had before. Why is it important to always remember that God has more blessings in store on the other side of difficult seasons?

REAL LIFE

Nobody is exempt from tough times. Take a moment to share how God brought you through painful times in the past. Also, pray for anybody going through a challenging season right now.

Did the tough experience you went through give you more endurance? Are you now more equipped to help others going through the same thing? How specifically did God get you through to the other side?



WEEK SIX WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

THE DISCIPLES WERE PERPLEXED

Chapter 21 in the Gospel of John records what the disciples were up to after Jesus was crucified and raised from the dead. They were perplexed because their expectations about Jesus being the next political ruler of Israel was smashed to nothing. Jesus died, and the disciples didn't know what to do next. Can you relate?

DO WHAT SEEMS RIGHT

John 21:3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.

Have you ever been through a season of uncertainty about your decisions? Have you experienced times when you didn't seem to make any progress? How did those times impact your perspective about God?

THE MORNING WILL COME

John 21:4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

When the morning time came God showed up, but the disciples didn't know it was Jesus. Have you ever felt like God was nowhere to be found in your situation? Do you believe Jesus is nearby even when you can't see him?

IS GOD SPEAKING TO YOU?

John 21:5-6 Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?"

They answered Him, "No." And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

Even after Jesus began speaking, the disciples still didn't recognize him. Describe to the group a time when God was speaking but you didn't realize it was him until later.

IT IS THE LORD!

John 21:7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

When John saw the miracle catch of fish, he finally realized Jesus was on the shore. Talk about times in your life God blessed you with a miracle.

GOD HAS BEEN COOKING

John 21:9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.

The disciples went fishing because they didn't know what else to do. When they got to shore, Jesus had already prepared a warm meal.

Do you believe God is working behind the scenes on your behalf, even when you can't see him? What does the meal preparation say about the heart of Jesus towards his people?