
LIFE TEEN PARENT LETTER

Check out our Parent Life website at lparentlife.com for resources on how to guide your teen in a faith-filled way through modern day culture!

LIFE NIGHT: GOD IN THE PAIN

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Although our lives can be wildly different, we all experience the discomfort of pain, both physical and psychological, to some degree. What sets us apart is how we choose to engage with pain and suffering, along with our ability to recognize the pain and suffering of our neighbor. In the uncertainty of our current climate, many elements of our lives have become increasingly difficult, and, for many of us, we are craving stability.

As our social media accounts and news channels are flooded with the uncertainty of the state of our world and economy, we again are driven to seek security for ourselves and for our family. This is the duty of a parent: to take care of their family. Part of our duty includes modeling an awareness of the needs of others, within our family and in our local and global communities. We have to be careful not to seek comfort that is at the expense of others. If we only focus on our material well-being or comfort, we may overlook the suffering of others and our need for Jesus. This can inadvertently perpetuate suffering in the world.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus modeled this awareness by prioritizing healing for those who were suffering and hurting. The Gospel of Luke tells the story of a paralyzed man who was stretched down through a roof and placed at the feet of Jesus (Luke 5:17-26). Jesus immediately forgave this man's sin, then He healed him of his paralysis. Jesus prioritized this man's soul, even in the midst of the discomfort from which the paralytic was suffering. There are numerous instances like this in the Gospel that show how Jesus brought healing to pain and suffering in a way that no one else could. Jesus shows up for us in our pain — the pain of uncertainty, the pain of no job security, the pain of lost loved ones, the pain of restless, quarantined children — and He empowers us to show up for others in their pain, as well.

As disciples, we are meant to imitate Jesus' actions, and we can start doing so by looking toward those in our household. This can mean providing those we love with what they need to have an authentic relationship with the Lord, and not simply providing comforts that distract us from boredom and stress or material security. Once we begin to see how Jesus acts by serving not just material comfort but the spiritual needs of others, our hearts will begin to change. We begin to recognize the experience of pain and suffering in others more readily and make choices that are less self-directed. It is here that we are able to serve through advocacy with a Christ-like heart of compassion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What pain are we experiencing as a family? How can we turn to Jesus for comfort in our hurt? How can we react differently to our current experiences of pain and discomfort?
2. Is there a comfort you are not unwilling to give up? If so, why? What comfort can we sacrifice for an hour a day in order to use that time to help others (e.g., turn off the air conditioning to save power, give up all screen time to create medical masks, commit to an hour of silence to pray for all those who are affected by the pandemic)?
3. As a family, how can we use this time of quarantine to deepen our relationship with God? What can we do?