



BUMPER STICKER THEOLOGY

SESSION 3 - EVERYTHING HAPPENS FOR A REASON

SERIES BIG IDEA

This series takes a look at some familiar Christian axioms as we ask the question, "Is it Biblically sound or just sound Biblical?"

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

God can use everything that happens for a reason.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 10:28-29; Genesis 1:28; Romans 8:28

ICE BREAKER & OPENING THOUGHT

These questions orient people to the discussion. For this particular week, be sensitive to the fact that some people may have clung to this bumper sticker slogan during a time of heartache or struggle, so be careful not to be flippant or come across as insensitive. While the bumper sticker slogan may be false, the truth is that the truth is even better. "Dallas Willard once said, "Nothing irredeemable can happen to God's people."

BIBLE DISCUSSION

This section is where the group has a chance to explore the way God has chosen to be sovereign over the world. God has made a choice to give dominion to his creation, which can either be used to honor God and live into his Kingdom or to set themselves up as rival kingdoms. A few passages that reflect that view of God beyond Genesis 1:28 are in Matthew 6 where Jesus teaches his disciples to pray for God's Kingdom (or God's ways) to come on earth as these ways are already in heaven. This assumes that there are rebel kingdoms that have set themselves up against God's. You could also point to the "Let there be" language in Genesis 1. The Hebrew language of "let there be" expresses a desire or wish, not a command. God is envisioned as a power sharing God with creation and especially with those made in God's image. This of course sets up the possibility that creation won't always be in line with God's goals for the world, but the fact that God can redeem the worst kinds of situations without meticulous control of the world points to God's wisdom and greatness.

LIFE APPLICATION

The first section of this guide can feel a little heady or theological, but the second part of this guide gives the group time to explore how our power sharing God can work to redeem the hurts in our individual lives. Encourage the group to be open about areas where they've seen God redeem ugliness and pain, and also where they are still waiting on God to come through for them. You may need to lead the way and share a past experience or a present one that may have you questioning or doubting. In the experience of many Christ followers, God doesn't wave a magic wand, but slowly through the work of the Spirit, our lives are transformed. God doesn't run us over, but continues to ask us and call us to align our kingdom with his, and in God's time our lives are redeemed through prayer and the community of God's people. God can use everything that happens for a reason, or for God's purposes.

CHALLENGE

For an entire week, begin each day reading Romans 8:26-28. Then throughout each day, look for how God might be at work through you and the circumstances you encounter. Start the next morning journaling how you saw God at work.