

**BIG IDEA**

We may never find the answer to the question “Why” but we all have the opportunity to choose the “How” of how we’ll get through what we’re going through.

**SCRIPTURE**

Deuteronomy 34; James 1:2-4

**ICE BREAKER & OPENING THOUGHT**

1. Share a story of a vacation or an event when things didn’t go as planned.
2. Sometimes life doesn’t always work out the way we plan, and as we suffer and deal with disappointment, it develops character in us. It also helps us realize that life isn’t all about our happiness, but that there is a larger mystery in what God is doing. Describe a time when you learned that life wasn’t all about you.

**BIBLE DISCUSSION**

3. Read Deut. 34:1-6; 10-12. How do you feel about Moses not entering into the promised land after all the work he had done? What else stands out to you in this section?
4. Read James 1:2-4. What is your response to this scripture? Why?
5. Read the following quote by Victor Frankl, who survived a Nazi prison camp. What do you think about his statement?

“Suffering in and of itself is meaningless; we give our suffering meaning by the way in which we respond to it...Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation. You cannot control what happens to you in life, but you can always control what you will feel and do about what happens to you.” –Victor Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning*

**LIFE APPLICATION**

6. Sometimes we may think that our life is pointless. We may feel that we have failed if we don’t do every single thing we’ve been asked to do or want to do. How do you feel when things don’t go the way you expected?
7. We don’t want to minimize the pain that we experience during difficult times of grief or loss. These times can be incredibly difficult. Brainstorm what positive things could potentially result from our trials. Know that this is not a time to dismiss or play down the pain that we experience but instead courageously explore what other possible responses we might choose to help us get through what we are going through. What are other things trials can produce? How have you seen the trials in your own life produce positive things for yourself or others?
8. At the beginning of our series, we introduced the three phases of faith. Which stage would you say describes your relationship with God right now?

**CLOSING**

These phases of faith are not a one-and-done experience. We don’t cycle through the Challenged Faith phase and into Living Faith never to venture back into Challenged Faith again. Perhaps revisit the last question periodically in your group. Notice how each group member grows and moves through these phases. Let them be a voice of hope and encouragement to someone entering a Challenged Faith phase.