



Trust Issues

When God Seems Uncooperative

#nptrustissues

Week 3
3 of 5

September 24, 2017

Bottom Line: Prayer reminds me I'm not in control, but I can talk to One who is.

Icebreaker: Who controls the remote at your house? Are you a channel surfer or a one-show-at a time person?

Key Verse: . . . even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. 2 Corinthians 12:7-9

The candor and truthfulness about hard issues in the Bible is one of the reasons we can know for sure that the Word of God is a true, authentic book, written by real and authentic people. Sometimes people misrepresent faith in God, as if it is an antidote to prevent any problems. Jesus never did that, Paul never did that. Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble." Paul said plainly, "I begged God to do this for me and he said 'No.'" Only people who were absolutely truthful, not trying to make a sale, would do that.

Instead of trying to present a false picture of shelter from trouble, Paul says, "Listen—we don't get everything we want, but we get something we don't deserve and could never give ourselves—God's grace. Grace is better than a 'Yes.'" Anyone can do well when things are going their way and they have the privilege of playing to their strengths. It's a different story when things are tough and no breaks are in sight. God Himself has said No. The person who comes through that victoriously is indebted to God's grace and becomes an epic figure in life. When we come through situations that disappoint, that could destroy faith and cultivate cynicism, but we have joy and contentment, grace overflows and our intimacy with God becomes deeper than we could have imagined. In the gap between what I want God to do and what God chooses to do is sufficient, sustaining, empowering grace.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most specifically from the weekend message?

Discuss: "God's lack of cooperation is not an argument for or against His existence. If there was correlation between a lack of cooperation and whether someone existed then there would be many people who would not exist in my life."

Have you ever been taught that if you "get it right," if you give enough, if you just serve more, things will turn out right? What's the fallacy and the fallout from that?

What are the kinds of things we experience that make us tempted to think God doesn't know us, God doesn't know our situation, God doesn't care? What is your strategy for overcoming that temptation?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

Discuss: "So, to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh . . ." Do you think Paul got God's motives right? What does that make you think about God's purposes in our struggles?

Discuss: "My power works best in weakness." How have you seen that to be true?

Discuss: "It is not a lack of faith to ask God to take away your thorns. But God has permission to say NO."

Discuss: "You cannot experience God's sustaining grace while resisting His will."

Discuss: Sustaining grace begins with "Not my will, but your will be done."

NEXT STEPS

This week consider taking some next steps together as a group:

1. Commit to bringing someone to First Wednesday.
2. Report on prayer-list progress.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Prayer reminds me I'm not in control, but I can talk to One who is.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: James 4:6
Tuesday: John 11:21-29
Wednesday: 2 Corinthians 1:4
Thursday: Luke 22:42
Friday: Hebrews 4:14-16
Saturday: 2 Peter 1:2
Sunday: John 10:10

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.
(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)