

THE FINAL WORD

“Faithful Through Suffering”

October 5th, 2014

Revelation 2:8-11

Message #4

Leader's Guide

DOMINANT THOUGHT OF THIS STUDY: Jesus tells us we will face trials and tests, but we will never face them alone. He is always with us and He promises to reward us. Our goal is to view trials and tests as opportunities to grow and mature in Christ.

QUICK REVIEW

1. Take a moment to look back over the principles from this week's sermon. If you only had 2 minutes to tell a friend about this message, what would you say?

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

2. What is the most difficult thing you've trained for physically? How did you prepare for it? **(Attempting to connect physical preparation with spiritual preparation. This could be great to refer back to later in the discussion.)**

What did you learn from it?

INTO THE BIBLE

3. The church in Smyrna was doing a lot of things right. But instead of a reward, Jesus tells them they will first be tested. Often times, we like to avoid tests. God tells us about how tests are used to make us more like His Son. Read the following passages of scripture and answer the corresponding questions: **(I'm hoping through the following two scriptures for people to see that tests and trials are not punishment but opportunities for growth. Tests are good things that draw us closer to God and prepare us for great things!)**

James 1:2-4

According to this verse, what do trials in our lives produce?

In your opinion, why does perseverance lead to maturity in Christ? **(It teaches us to stay strong against the waves of life. When things are down, we don't get too down because we know Christ is always there. When things are up, we praise God because He is always good.)**

Hebrews 12:4-11

Why is discipline so closely tied to love?

How does God's discipline prepare you for future trials?

Is there a discipline you have been avoiding?

4. Our faith in Christ is described as more precious than gold. We spend much of our lives trying to grow our wealth. What are you doing to grow your faith? **(My thought process on this question: Why do we consider money the most valuable thing we have? The most valuable thing we have, faith, can't be seen or held physically.)**

Read 1Peter 1:6-9.

God does not overlook the trials in your life. They have meaning and value. What trials have you faced?

What have you learned from those trials?

(Another great question to ask here: When trials come, do you tend to run from God or run to God? Why?)

5. Even though we are tested, our joy and peace are complete in the Lord at all times. How does the following quote encourage you?:

“Peace is not the absence of a storm. It is the presence of Christ.”
(Hoping people see and discuss that peace and joy are not products of our circumstance, but rather, products of a genuine faith in Christ.)

TAKING IT HOME (This is a great time to split up the guys and girls in the group. Application questions lead into prayer time really well. Being separated during this time may lead to more openness and transparency.)

6. One of the reasons for trials and testing is to teach us to die to ourselves and be centered completely on Christ. Is there anything in your life you feel Christ is asking you to let go of?

How can your group help keep you accountable?

7. Complete the following sentence:

After reading in the Word and talking to my small group today, the Holy Spirit might be telling me...

PRAYER REQUESTS (REMEMBER: NOT EVERYONE FEELS COMFORTABLE PRAYING OUTLOUD. GIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE TO PRAY WITHOUT MAKING PEOPLE FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE.)

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