



Dear Parents,

This week's episode of *GOSPEL Journey Maui* will be addressing the question: *Why do bad things happen?* We will be dealing with the problem of evil and suffering and will be discussing the Bible's answer to this difficult question.

It is important that you discuss these kinds of faith-defining questions with your teen. Studies show that teens who wrestle through the challenging questions of their faith during their high school years have a deeper, stronger faith to draw upon once they graduate from high school.

Here are some ideas for activities to do as a family this week that might help you approach this challenging topic:

- Over dessert, discuss this C.S. Lewis quote: "We were promised sufferings. They were part of the program. We were even told, 'Blessed are they that mourn.'" (Source: Think Exist Quotations.) Then, read together Matthew 5:1-12, which is part of the Sermon on the Mount. Talk about your reactions to the passage, and take turns sharing ways you are mournful, meek, insulted, or persecuted. Then share the ways God strengthens and comforts you—or ways you'd like Him to.
- Take on a family service project together. Brainstorm ways you can help someone who's hurting, then do it together. You might volunteer at a soup kitchen or rescue mission, make repairs at a halfway house or domestic abuse center, visit friends who are in the hospital, or donate clothes to victims of a natural disaster.
- Have each family member read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7 individually, considering how its message relates to your family. Then, have the oldest family member email everyone else the beginning of a prayer that's centered on this passage. The next oldest person should reply to all with the next part of the prayer, and so on until the youngest person finishes the prayer. Print the email and post it prominently in your home so you'll be reminded to pray for your family.

You might also find some of the following discussion questions helpful as you interact with your teen on this topic:

- How often do we talk as a family about why God lets bad things happen? In what ways can we communicate more about our trust or lack of trust, understanding or lack of understanding?



- What kind of bad things have happened to our family? What kind of pain are we experiencing?
- Is it important that we accept His healing and comfort in bad times? If so, what steps can we take as a family?
- What kinds of suffering do we see in people close to our family? What can we do about it?

Thanks for partnering with me as our youth group tackles some of these great life questions!

Your youth leader,

