

Holding On to Hope

Book Discussion Guide written by *Holding on to Hope* author Nancy Guthrie

Introduction and Chapter 1: Loss

The author explains that Job was chosen to suffer because of his great faith. What do you think of this?

Have you experienced a deeply personal loss? Are you experiencing one now, or do you know someone who is?

Like Job, do you wonder why God would allow this to happen?

The author writes what she said after she heard about her daughter's poor prognosis: "Here is where I find out if I really believe what I say I believe" (page 4). How do you feel about this statement in light of your own struggle?

Chapter 2: Tears

Have you ever expected that having faith would make painful experiences hurt less? Explain.

Why do some people want to rush through sadness (or want *us* to rush through it)?

What are some of the healing properties of tears? Why are some people afraid of tears?

Are you willing to invite God to walk with you through the healing process?

Chapter 3: Worship

Can you imagine worshiping God in the midst of grief, as Job did? What might make this possible?

Does worship depend on how we feel? Why or why not?

What role can the Psalms play in times of sorrow and suffering?

Chapter 4: Gratitude

Is it hard for you to let go of everything and trust God to do his will? Why or why not?

Why is it easy to have a sense of entitlement about blessings instead of a sense of gratitude?

When God gives you a blessing, does the blessing become yours or remain God's?

Chapter 5: Blame

What do we deserve from God?

What might be some results of blaming God?

Who or what is the source of evil in our world?

What does it mean to fear God? Is it a good thing? If so, how can we grow in the fear of God?

Chapter 6: Suffering

Do you agree with the author that most people experience intense pain at some time, or do you think that just some people do? Explain.

Should godly people be spared from pain? Why or why not?

Why do some people become better through pain, while others become bitter?

What are some alternatives to becoming bitter in times of trouble?

Chapter 7: Despair

Is it appropriate always to be honest with God, even with our ugliest feelings?

Have you ever stopped praying and left God out of a situation? If so, what has been the result?

What is the alternative to rejecting God?

Chapter 8: Why?

Why is it so important to us to know why something happened?

Why is it frustrating not to know “why”?

Can you see suffering as a way to glorify God? How?

What is the difference between asking, “Why?” and asking, “For what purpose?”

Chapter 9: Eternity

Do you yearn for heaven? Why or why not?

What does it mean to have an “eternal perspective”?

If you value earthly life over eternity, are you willing to let God change your perspective? What are some ways to invite God to do this?

Chapter 10: Comforters

Do you ever get tongue-tied around people who are suffering or grieving? Why?

Is there any truth to the old adage that says, “When trouble comes, you find out who your true friends are”?

Are you able to forgive those who have let you down?

What are some practical ways that you can be a comforter to someone in need?

Chapter 11: Mystery

Do you think that knowing why we suffer makes it any easier to bear?

What does it mean to trust God with the outcome of a situation?

What are some ways you can show God that you are trusting him?

Chapter 12: Submission

What do you think God is calling you to submit to right now?

Are you willing to submit to God's sovereign will? What are the benefits of doing so?
What is the alternative?

What does submission to God look like?

Chapter 13: Intimacy

What is the difference between knowing *about* God and *knowing* God?

How does pain help us to know God?

What is God's overriding purpose in allowing pain in our lives?

Epilogue/Wrap-Up

What messages did Gabriel's birth bring to the author?

What did the author learn about Jesus?

What have you learned about Jesus by going through your own painful situation?