



UNCERTAINTY: Bible Lessons for Families

Lesson: Hope in Tough Times
Project Supervisor: Nick Diliberto
Graphic Design: Kate Forkel

Created by Ministry to Youth
MinistrytoYouth.com

Series Overview

Uncertainty: A 6-pack of Bible lessons helping families wrestle with the COVID-19 pandemic and other uncertain times.

UNCERTAINTY: HOPE IN TOUGH TIMES

BIBLE: 2 Corinthians 11:23b-27; 2 Corinthians 4:7-9; Book of Job

MAIN IDEAS: We have hope in Jesus, especially in the tough times.

- God can speak to you through the storm.
- God is God.
- Pain will not last forever.
- Look for the good.

SUPPLIES

For Family Activity:

- One beanbag or a small, soft ball

For Object Lesson:

- 2 lemons (cut one lemon in half)
- Sugar
- Spoon
- Cup

FAMILY ACTIVITY

In this activity, you will toss a beanbag/ball from one person to another. Unless you feel comfortable playing inside, just have everyone go outside to be safe.

I have a simple activity for us to do together as a family.

To begin, two of us will stand close, right across from each other. We will toss the beanbag/ball back and forth, taking a small step backward every, single time we catch it.

The first person to drop the beanbag/ball is out of the game, and someone else will step in and take their place – you just start from where the other person left off.

The next time someone drops the beanbag/ball, another person will step in and take their place.

We will keep tossing the beanbag/ball until everyone has had a turn, and there is a champion.

After the game, ask... Did it make sense that we didn't start over each round by standing close together again?

Did it feel like you had no hope of winning when you were so far apart?

Allow everyone to share how they felt during the game.

Today, we're going to tackle two topics: hope and how to trust God during tough times.

TEACH

We're living in tough times.

Due to the quarantine, you might be bored, lonely, disappointed, sad, etc... Or you might be discouraged due to the uncertainty of your new reality.

There has never been a time in any of our lives when nearly everyone in the world is being affected by one circumstance.

Now, think about this...

If you could describe how you're feeling with one word or phrase... what would it be?

Think about that for a moment.

Give everyone a minute to think about their 'word' and then have everyone share.

The truth is that tough times are a part of life.

Especially, right now... but this will eventually pass.

And at some point, in the future, something else will happen to affect our lives negatively.

But, the good news is that we always have hope in God.

Paul, who wrote a huge chunk of the New Testament, had his fair share of tough times.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:23b-27.

"I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers.

I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. I have worked hard and long, enduring

many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.”

Paul faced some pretty tough times. Think about how you would feel if you were him. Let Paul tell you in his own words how he dealt with all of these things because they are pretty inspiring...

Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-9.

“We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.”

Paul experienced the anxiety and stress of extreme circumstances, but he wasn't defeated.

Paul didn't make it sound like things were easy.

He felt the pain of what was happening... but he didn't focus on it.

Listen again to his words:

“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”

Paul could face anything because he knew that Jesus was with him and within him.

Life is hard.

But with Jesus, we are not ever destroyed, in despair, abandoned or destroyed... why?

See, with Jesus, you ALWAYS have hope! Hope for now and the future.

Sometimes our situations change for the better. Sometimes it stays the same or even gets worse.

But regardless of the situation, we have Jesus, who brings us hope. He will help us endure whatever we face.

Take a few minutes to discuss the following questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you feel struck down, pressed, destroyed, or stressed right now?
- Are there other words you would add to this list?
- How does Jesus give you hope right now? Explain.

OBJECT LESSON

Have the lemons, cup, spoon, and sugar on hand.

Lemons are known for being sour... super sour.

Now, if I take this lemon (uncut) and squeeze it as hard as I can... nothing happens.

But, if I take these lemon halves and squeeze them, I get delicious lemon juice.

Well, we can make it delicious by adding sugar.

Quickly make a glass of lemonade and pass it around for everyone to try a sip.

Squeeze the whole lemon again and then hold it up for everyone to see.

This lemon is perfect – it's undamaged, and it looks kind of cool, but it can't be used for its full benefit until it's cut open.

Then, we can create something pretty awesome like this lemonade... or a lemon pie or lemon cookies.

Our true beauty isn't seen when everything is perfect.

Sometimes God allows us to be squeezed a little... or even a lot by circumstances in life.

Why? Because He knows that something really wonderful can be produced from those times... and He loves us so much that it's worth the pain we experience to get to what God has for us.

Think about this... Is there anything in life that is squeezing you right now? Can you see how God will use this time to produce something beautiful in you?

After the object lesson, say... Now, let's take a look at someone else we read about in the Bible who experienced really tough times.

THE STORY OF JOB

Have you ever thought...

Why is there suffering in the world?

Why did COVID-19 even happen in the first place?

Why do good people hurt?

The question of suffering is a question that people have been asking since the beginning of time.

Well, the Book of Job is God's way of saying that these are reasonable questions to ask.

The Book of Job is about a man who had a really great life and family.

And then everything, and I mean EVERYTHING fell apart.

Read the following passages or explain the story in your own words:

- Job 1:1-3
- Job 1:14-22
- Job 1:20-22
- Job 2:7-10

Job's friends come to sit with him to help, but to make a long story short (read the Book of Job), they tell him that he must have really made God mad for all this to happen.

And through it all, through all 42 chapters of this book, Job never loses his faith in God.

But He asked God questions... and he had a *lot* of questions.

When you go through tough times, you might have questions for God too.

And that's okay!

It's perfectly normal.

Ask those questions to God.

Talk about them with your family and friends.

Here's something else to think about...

God spoke to Job through the storm. One of the things He said was: God is God.

He was telling Job that he is sovereign. He's bigger than any situation.

God is bigger than the Coronavirus, the quarantine life, or any circumstance you face.

He's in control. He's on the throne.

God is God, which also means that He notices our suffering. Like he answered Job, he'll answer us when we call out to him.

Here's another lesson to learn...

Although Job was horrified by the situation, he was eventually able to move on.

The COVID-19 pandemic will eventually pass.

Life will go on... one day.

Pain and suffering will not last forever.

It's easy to think the tough times you face will never end. Eventually, it will. Finally, you'll be able to move on.

And one final thing to think about...

The Book of Job ends as God restores Job and gives him way more than what he ever had to begin with, and you get the idea that Job knew God in a genuine and profound way.

Read Job 42:10-17.

God will often bring good out of difficult circumstances.

Your situation might not turn out as great as Job's but look for the good that can come out of a bad situation.

There's always something good... a life lesson to learn or a new opportunity. Your job is to look for it.

Pray together and then end the lesson.

Take a few minutes to discuss the following questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What one thing about Job's story stuck out to you?
- If God agreed to answer one question related to the COVID-19 pandemic, what would you ask? Why would you ask that question?
- What do you look forward to the most... when life gets back to normal?

FAMILY CHALLENGE

As a family, think of someone who has recently gone through a tough time.

Brainstorm ideas of how you can minister to that person. Allow everyone to give input.

Use as many suggestions as you can and talk about what it will look like to reach out to the person you have chosen.