

Cultivate Reflection Guide

When in Rome: Does God Care About Pain?

May 8 & 9, 2021

If you missed this weekend's messages, watch at cultivate.sc/discussion

Following God in a culture that doesn't is easier said than done. The book of Romans is full of foundational gospel truth that will teach us how our faith can influence the world around us, instead of letting others tell us what to believe – in the places where Christianity and culture collide.

Kindly Note Since many of our Cultivate groups are participating in our Spring Book Study, we'll be offering an abridged version of our Cultivate Reflection Guide for the next 6 weeks. If that includes you, we encourage you to choose at least one of these questions to reflect on personally and/or respond to during your group time.

A Future Hope: God cares deeply about our pain and His word affirms that it is real. He does not minimize our pain, but He does want us to be REAL with Him about it. Why? Because while God sees where we are, He also knows where we are going to be – and that should give us hope for the future.

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed...²¹ in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into freedom and glory of the children of God...²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently." Romans 8:18-19, 21, 24-25 NIV

"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:18 NLT

- How do these verses encourage you that "what is" is not all there is for us? How does that give you hope?
- Often, we just want pain to go away, yet it can be the very thing that drives us to God, even motivating us to change or grow. How have you seen God use pain in your life for a greater purpose – either in you or around you?
- Are there any "present sufferings" you are experiencing or enduring that you need to be REAL with God about? While this could be physical pain, it might also be spiritual confusion or sin, an emotional struggle or even relational conflict. Turn to Him right now and tell Him. He is listening.
- Who else in your life can you trust with your circumstances? Are you willing to be REAL with others and invite them to listen, to help or to even hold you accountable as you pursue growth? What would it look like for you to step into that kind of authentic community this week?
- Romans 8:26-27 encourages us that even when we can't be REAL with God or others, the Spirit of God is searching our hearts and praying for us. If that's you, make some time to simply be still before God – invite Him to search your heart, speak into your life and pray the prayers you most need. He promises to do that for you.