

YOUR STORY GOD'S GLORY

PURSUING THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

RIVER OAKS | TIMBERGROVE | ONLINE

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Your Story | God's Glory: Finding Purpose in Your Pain

INTRO: Your Story | God's Glory: Pursuing the Purpose of Life

This January, we're learning about the purpose of life according to the Bible. Whether you're someone who loves the Bible or you consider yourself a skeptic, or any combination of the two, I'm really glad you're here, and I'm looking forward to this month-long journey of learning more about life's purpose with my Story family! Love, Pastor Eric

Think about a time in your life when you felt very close to God (or closer than you feel now). What were the circumstances going on around you that may have contributed to how close you felt to God?

In your experience, what role do pain and suffering play in opening us up to experiencing God's presence?

This week we're learning about finding PURPOSE in your PAIN. First, let's revisit the foundational Bible passage for this series:

Colossians 1:15-16 *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.*

Based on what you know about Jesus, a.k.a. "The Son," how could he possibly relate to our pain and suffering?

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If we have been created through Christ and for Christ, how should that affect the way we view seasons of suffering?

If you watched or listened to Pastor Eric's message with Greg Kelley, write down any takeaways, ideas, or questions that stood out to you:

Let's take a closer look at a passage from the Bible that teaches us how to deal with pain:

Romans 8:28 *We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose.*

This passage is often taken to mean that, once you're a Christian, God watches your back and bad things won't happen to you. Obviously, that's not what this passage says. As Greg Kelley and Pastor Eric discussed in this week's sermon, Jesus told his disciples, "In this life you will have trouble, but take heart, for I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

So, what *does* Romans 8:28 mean? Let's break it down one phrase at a time:

- **We know...** How do we *know*? Based on what experience or truth can we claim to *know* something about God?
- **...that God causes...** If God is God, then He must be the First Cause of the universe, right? Even when it doesn't feel that way, there is a greater plan and purpose for the universe, and for you. If we really believed that to be the case, how would it change the way we experience seasons of pain and hardship?

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- **...everything to work together...** The events of your life aren't random or meaningless, but each season is part of a greater story God is telling through your life. How would you describe the "season" that you are in right now, and how do you think this particular season might be part of God's greater story?
- **...for the good of those who love God...** When we struggle, it's important to remember that God is in the GOOD business. Time and time again in Scripture, God entered into a situation that seems hopeless, and He made something good come out of it. Can you remember a time in your life when everything seemed dark and all hope seemed lost, but somehow God walked you through it?
- **...and are called according to his purpose...** There's that word again: purpose. We believe we were made through Christ...*for Christ*. Everything that God allows to happen in your life is ultimately to make you more like Christ. How has the pain of your past shaped you to live and love more like Christ?