

THE PRIZE: Under Pressure

Session 6 – God’s Plan when You are Under Pressure

Student’s Guide

Featuring Brad Guzan, Kaká and Paul

DVD – 14:32 to 22:05

WARM-UP

“If you put your trust in God, life will get easier; and if you are obedient, success is guaranteed.”
What is your reaction to this statement?

TEAM HUDDLE

Both players speak of times when they have experienced disappointments and defeat. When bad things happen in life, people often question either the existence of God or where He is in the situation. Why do you think this might be?

How did the two players say they dealt with difficulties in their professional lives?

COACH’S CORNER

Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-27

Are they servants of Christ? I know I sound like a madman, but I have served Him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. ²⁴Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵Three 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. ²⁶I 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. ²⁷I 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 is historically considered one of the greatest disciples of Jesus. Yet his testimony of hardship and suffering is lengthy and tragic.

How would you feel if you were in his shoes?

Does it surprise you that someone who faithfully follows Jesus should experience so many trials and so much pain? Why or why not?

Having Jesus in your life does not eliminate problems. However, God makes some amazing promises in the Bible that can help us when we face difficulties, setbacks or broken dreams.

What do the following Scriptures promise?

1. *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.”* Isaiah 43:2 (NIV)
“I may walk through valleys as dark as death, but I won't be afraid. You are with me, and your shepherd's rod makes me feel safe.” Psalm 23:4 (CEV)
2. *“Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)
3. *“God will strengthen you with His own great power so that you will not give up when troubles come, but you will be patient.”* Colossians 1:11 (NCV)
4. *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”* Romans 8:28 (NIV)

Who works for the good in all things according to this verse from the Bible?
Who is the promise for?

What sort of good things do you think God might bring out of difficult circumstances? Give examples, if you can.

Do you have a story you can share of how you have experienced some or all of these things (God's presence, peace, power and purpose) in your life during a time of trial?

WARM-DOWN

Spend time as a group thanking God for His presence, peace, power and purpose. Take time to pray for anyone who is struggling with a present or past pain. Be sensitive. It is vital not to judge anyone who may be struggling to see God's hand in the middle of his/her difficulties.

EXTRA TRAINING

Memory verse

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28 (NIV)

Prayer/Worship Focus

During the week make regular time to spend with God. Talk to Him about trials or difficulties you may be facing, and thank Him for His presence, power, peace and purpose. **Read Philippians 4:4-7.** As you hand over your situation to Him, be assured that He can replace your anxiety with His perfect peace. Be

prepared to come back next week and share how you have experienced these promises through your trial.

Putting it into Practice

Be on the alert for opportunities to express the love of Jesus to someone you know who is presently experiencing a difficult and painful time.