



Evil Serves the Purposes of God

MAIN IDEA

- **Evil serves God's purposes.**

MEMORY VERSE

The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.
—Proverbs 16:4

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Genesis 37:18-28
- 2) Genesis 39:7-40:4
- 3) Proverbs 16:4
- 4) Acts 5:30-31
- 5) Hebrews 2:9-10
- 6) 1 Peter 3:18



LESSON SUMMARY

The most horrific evil in the world—the crucifixion of God's own Son—was planned by God, and served ultimately for the greatest good in the world. Yet God didn't make Satan or sinful men crucify Jesus, He let them do what was already in their hearts to do.

Satan did not spoil God's plan, but rather was used by God to accomplish His good purposes. The evil done against Joseph by his brothers, Potiphar's wife, and Potiphar was truly wicked, and yet God used it to serve His good purposes. Everything that happens—even evil—serves God's plans.

We can be tempted to see a part of God's plan and think it is a mistake, but there are no mistakes in God's purposes. No evil can touch us that does not fit into God's plans, and every evil against us has a purpose.

If you are a child of God, He will not let any evil touch you unless it is ultimately for your good, and you can rest in the reality of this grace toward you. With your son or daughter, praise God for His control over evil.

AS YOU WALK BY THE WAY

Ask your son or daughter to share with you what can be learned about God's providence over evil from the story of Samson in Judges 14:1-4, Judges 15:14-16, and Judges 16:28-30.

Discuss some "bad things" (evil) that have happened to you or your family and how they have served God's purposes.

What evil have you seen that has fit into God's plan?

ACTION STEP

During application time, each student was asked to decide on a personal response to what was learned. After recording this step below, discuss how your child can apply this response to his or her life this week.



SUGGESTION FOR JOURNALING:

Record your thoughts about evil serving the purposes of God.

Record your thoughts about this verse:

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.—1 Peter 3:18

SEEING GOD AT WORK

You Will Die Soon

by Noël Piper

The congregation sang together, praising the LORD. Suddenly one voice soared above all the others, lifting everyone's heart with it. They knew it was Joe, a man who depended on God every day for his life. He never knew whether he would be alive the next week, but you wouldn't guess it when you heard him singing to God.

Joe was a person who used to be very disobedient. For a long time he lived a life that totally ignored God. But God didn't ignore Joe. God got Joe's attention, and caused Joe to begin to love Him and to follow Him. That meant that Joe left behind the disobedient life he had been living. It was not easy to make such a big change.

Just a few months later, Joe's doctor told him he wouldn't live many more years. He had a disease that is a threat, especially to people who are living in certain ways that disobey God—ways that Joe had been living.

At first, Joe felt as if God had deserted him, and just when he had started to really believe God! But when he told God how he felt, God comforted him and gave him a promise. "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me

and find me when you seek me with all your heart'" (Jeremiah 29:11-13, from the 1984 edition of the New International Version of the Bible).

And God kept His promises. The doctor told Joe to expect only two more years. But God gave him 11 and a half years. During this time, Joe wrote, sang, and spoke to groups all over the world. He told them about God's power to change their lives and about the good plans God has for the people who trust Him and follow Him. That didn't mean that God made life easy for Joe. Often he was sick and in pain, but a lot of times his friends didn't realize it, unless it was so bad he had to go to the hospital.

Joe shocked some people when he said that he was thankful for the illness that would kill him someday. He was *thankful*, because it made him depend on God. Because of his illness, he learned to know God in a very deep way.

His friends could see that he wasn't afraid of dying. Why wasn't he? Because God kept His promise to give him "a hope and a future." Joe knew that dying didn't mean the end of everything. No, it meant he would be moving into the future—with God.

Think about this: What caused Joe's illness? How was the evil in Joe's life used for good by God? Can you think of other times that God has caused good to come from bad things? Does this mean that God doesn't care about evil? How do you know this?