

# GROUP DISCUSSION

Questions for facilitating dynamic discussion

## Silver Linings

**Week 3: No Pain, No Gain**  
**Luke 1:18-25; 57-66**

**Week of December 12, 2021**  
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We hear the phrase "no pain no gain" in sports a lot — referring to the physical exertion we need to improve our performance and skills. But many of us have also experienced emotional or spiritual pain, which helped shape us into who we are today. This week we look at the life of Zechariah and examine the spiritual practice of discipline.

### Kicking it off:

What's one thing in your life that has taken you a long time to get good at doing (or at least decent)?

### Discussion:

1. Read 1 Timothy 4:7-8. Why do you think God instructs us to learn how to be godly?

*"Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."* (NIV)

2. In Luke 1:20a, we see that God disciplines Zechariah with silence, due to his lack of faith upon hearing from the angel Gabriel. What are some types of discipline in life that we might endure, especially as consequences, due to our disobedience?

*"But now, since you didn't believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time."* (NLT)

3. So often we don't connect with God because we're too busy connecting with everything else. Which things from this list tend to distract you the most from focusing on God? How do you counteract that?

- Technology
- Work
- Radio / TV
- School/ Homework
- Relational stressors/ negative people
- Time on the Internet
- Shopping
- Social media

4. Elizabeth wasn't the only one in the Bible who had a self-imposed discipline of solitude. Jesus, too, would often head to a solitary place to spend time praying or being alone with God. Take a look at these passages showing Jesus getting alone with His Father. (Each person in your group could pick 1 passage.) Does Jesus' example mostly encourage or mostly challenge you more? How so?

Matthew 4:1-2; Mark 1:35; Mark 6:46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 9:28; John 17

5. Read Romans 5:3-4. What are some other potential benefits or "silver linings" to hardship and training?

*"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation."* (NLT)

### Wrapping It Up:

When we experience discipline, eventually it can help produce a more Christ-like person. As a final prayer, use James 1:2-4 so that you each might consider trials and hardships as pure joy.