



11/11/2012 // GROUP DISCUSSION FROM THE CURRENT TEACHING SERIES ... HEADLINES

## START

Take a moment, go around the circle and introduce yourself. Each person needs to answer this question:

**If you were a superhero, what power would you have? What would you name yourself?**

## SHARE

We are in the series called "Headlines," in which we are looking at some amazing stories from God's word. These stories are amazing because they actually happened, and if we were alive in those days, these stories would have made some big headlines in the local paper. We have all read the paper and wondered why things happened the way they did. Why is it that storms seem to hit without reason? Why is it our candidate didn't win? Why would God allow certain things to happen that seem contrary to what we think God would want? Is God really in control? Does God really understand what is happening around us?

### Isaiah 46:3-13

I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do. Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness.

I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendor to Israel.

*What types of situations do you find difficult trust God with?*

*Do you feel God is ever delayed in helping you? If so, what makes you feel that way?*

*Can you give an example of a time when you tried to help someone who was being stubborn-hearted? How did that make you feel?*

## GROW

Throughout the message, we learned that God is sovereign, even when we don't fully understand his plan. Let's take a look at what God says to us when we question him or doubt that He is in control:

### Psalms 147:15-18

He sends out his command to the Earth; his word runs swiftly. He spreads the snow like wool and scatters the frost like ashes. Who can withstand his icy blast? He sends his word and melts them; he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow.

### Job 37:11-13

He loads the clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning through them. At his direction they swirl around over the face of the whole Earth to do whatever he commands them. He brings clouds to punish men, or to water his Earth and show his love.

### Exodus 4:11

The Lord said to him (Moses), "who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord?"





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## Deuteronomy 32:39

See now that I myself am He! There is no God besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

After reading these, which one of these stands out to you and why?

Read Exodus 4:10-17? Moses had difficulty trusting God and questions God's decision to use him to speak on God's behalf. God is angry with Moses because of his disobedience to listen. Have you ever run from what God was calling you to do because you were fearful?

When we don't trust God, we are actually living in fear and we think our way is better than God's way. Can you talk about a time when you did listen to God, despite the fear? How did that build your faith?

## MOVE

When we look around at our workplaces, cities and nation, we see that we are surrounded by people in high positions who are to lead and govern us well and uphold the laws that were established to protect and serve us. However, we are not guaranteed a perfect system of governance here on earth and we face difficulties and frustrations. Paul was well aware of this, especially in his time in which Christians were systematically persecuted severely and even put to death. Let's read how God asks us to live during difficult times:

## I Timothy 2:1-2

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

The Ephesian church was to pray "for everyone" (v. 1, literally, "all men"), but especially for the leaders of civil government. Paul did not specify here the content of these prayers, but almost certainly he was instructing that requests be made for the salvation of the populace and its governors. This can be seen clearly from the following verses. With Nero's growing resentment toward Christians—which came to full bloom after the fire in Rome in July, A.D. 64—and the general disintegration of the Roman Empire due to Nero's profligacy, Christians began to suffer persecution from the Roman authorities. Having recently been released from his Roman imprisonment, Paul was greatly aware of the deteriorating political atmosphere. Thus he urged prayer for the salvation of all men, but especially rulers, so that the stable, noninterfering environment of previous days might be recovered. This is the minimum requirement if Christians are to live **peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness**. (This is the first of 10 times Paul used the word *eusebia*, "godliness.") Times of political and social upheaval are excellent times in which to die for Christ, but hard times in which to live for Him. (Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1985). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*)

How can people live peaceful and quiet lives amidst such persecution of the church? How is this possible?

What ways can you be "light" to people at work, neighbors, or peers who might persecute you because of what you believe?

What tangible ways can we show love and compassion to those we disagree with? Who could you reach out to this week?

## PRAY

Let's put into practice what we have been learning by praying for each other.

Let's specifically be thankful and pray for our leaders, bosses, city officials, judges, senators and President that God would lead them, that they would follow God's decrees and do what is pleasing to God.