**Table Talk**

**Sermon Series: Tough As Nails--Message**

**3-21-2021**

**Introduction (8 min)**

Table Talk Groups (45-minute study) begin by watching the video and sharing the story below, then open up the discussion with the questions provided.

Southside Home (35-minute study) can skip to “Starting the Discussion” as a follow up to the worship experience.

**Table Talk Video: Tough As Nails – Message**

In our sermon this week we learned Jesus chose grit over quit in his message. He would suffer a cruel death on the cross, be buried, and rise again. He refused to quit. He kept the focus of his message clear. He showed passion and perseverance (grit) in his determination to die for you and me.

It is one thing to have grit over quit when you are working toward fulfilling a dream, which you push yourself to accomplish. It is quite another to remain focused and undeterred when you are facing pain, heartache, and tremendous suffering.

I was hurrying through the grocery store one day, and before I knew what was happening, I fell face-first onto the shiny linoleum floor. I knew something was wrong. It turned out I had broken my upper arm and shoulder in four places. It required a total reverse shoulder replacement. I thought, *why did it happen at this time in my life when I have so many things I need to accomplish?*

The break and the surgery brought new suffering. I slept upright at a 45-degree angle for six weeks. I spent long nights shifting in the chair agonizing over the sleepless hours filled with worry and pain. Suffering is something we don’t like to choose for ourselves. It’s usually something we try to avoid at all costs. I wanted to run away from what I was going through, but apart from a miracle, there was no way for me to sidestep what I was facing with my injury.

Jesus looked full faced into his suffering and met it with all the grit necessary to go through it. He didn’t face it by accident like I did. He knew it was coming. He knew it was his mission, his ministry, and his message. He had no desire to sidestep it. He embraced it as the Father’s will. His grit wasn’t attached to a personal agenda for worldly profit or power. He focused on the joy set before him. He saw us reconciled to God. He saw the sin-barrier removed and fellowship restored with us. He delighted in the joy of transforming our lives so that we could be free from the power of sin and saved for the glory of God. His eyes were fixed on the eternal joy of spending eternity with us, his church. We are the beneficiaries of his sufferings. Jesus sees us as worth the suffering. We are his inheritance, and he is ours.

--Carla Pollard

**Prayer (2 minutes)**

Father help us to learn what it takes to stay focused on you in the midst of any distractions we face. Provide us with the power and grit we need to live out our life’s message, bearing the image of Jesus even in the face of suffering. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

**Starting the Discussion (3 minutes)**

1. How did you handle a time in your life when you were faced with something that caused you hardship or suffering?

**Unfolding the Biblical Story (24 minutes)**

**Invite someone to read Mathew 16:21-27 and Matthew 17:22-23.**

2. What did you think Jesus wanted the disciples to know about his message?

3. Why do you think Peter and the disciples responded the way they did to what Jesus said?

4. Jesus had strong words for Peter in Mat. 16:23. What are your thoughts about the way Jesus responded to Peter? How would you have felt if you were Peter?

6. Share the ways you find hope through the message Jesus expressed in both of these Bible passages? Why does it give you hope?

7. Why do you think Peter and the disciples seemed to overlook that hope?

**Read Hebrews 11:24-26, 12:1-2.**

8. Share some ways you can, like Moses, make God’s story your life’s message?

9. How can we face distractions from the enemy, protests from family and friends, or other hard situations and stay focused on the message of Jesus written in our lives?

10. What wisdom can you take away from the passages today to help you develop the grit you need not to quit in your journey with Jesus?

**Prayer (2 minutes)**

Dear Lord, help us to lay aside distractions and focus on you and the message you lived out for us. Thank you for facing the cross for us. Give us the grit to be a witness of your love, compassion, and sacrifice. Help us to embrace your will. and not try to run away when things get hard. Carry us through troubles knowing we can do all things because you are our strength. Grant us the grit to live lives of faith filled with hope revealing your overcoming power to a lost world. In Jesus’ name, amen.

**Wrapping Up (2 minutes)**

See if anyone has any other questions or insights. Then summarize the group discussion as a reminder of what you learned together.

**Scripture Challenge (4 minutes)**

This week try to memorize Hebrews 12:1-2. Take a few minutes to practice/repeat it together as a group. If you struggle with memorization, try writing it out on a card and taping it up where you’ll see it several times a day, like the dash of your car, your computer screen, or your bathroom mirror. Find a way to make it matter! Keep the words of Jesus before you this week as you embrace His message in your life’s story.