

THE
BAD BOYS OF EASTER

PART 3: Twelve Feet of Separation

INTRODUCTION

When dreams don't come true, we turn our frustrations toward God. When things don't work out, nothing goes our way, and everyone else seems to have lives we can only dream of, we turn our frustrations toward God . . . or we stop believing. If you were taught to believe in a personal God who is all-knowing and all-powerful, how can you *not* turn your frustration on him when life gets difficult?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are you praying about in your life right now? How long have you been waiting for an answer from God?
2. Why do you think we're tempted to assume God should make our lives easy? What are some ways that assumption influences the way we view God?
3. Have you ever known someone who maintained a strong faith in God despite his or her difficult circumstances? If so, how did that person's faith influence your relationship with God?
4. Talk about a time when your disappointment with life made you frustrated with God. What did you do?
5. During the message, Andy said, *"God used the injustice experienced by Jesus to bring salvation to mankind. If you choose to trust him, God can bring good from what life has thrown at you as well."* Is it difficult for you to believe that? Why or why not?
6. Are there circumstances in your life right now that you need to surrender to God? If so, what is one thing you can do this week to begin to open your hands to your heavenly Father? How can this group support you?

MOVING FORWARD

Life happens. God *can* be trusted. As long as your fists are clenched, you can't receive from him what you need most. God will not force on you what you aren't willing to receive. When you open your hands in surrender, instead of clenching your fists in anger, you are a candidate for his life-giving, life-defining grace. When you throw up your hands in surrender, you may discover answers to the questions that have controlled you for years.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Luke 23:41-43