



PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

# Drowning



## DISCUSSION ►

One of the big questions about Christianity is why God would allow a Hell. If a person rebelled against God, wouldn't submit to God, what do you think God should do with such a person?

- Let him into Heaven anyway (but then God would be letting sin into His perfection and immediately polluting it).
- Force this person to surrender (but this would violate his free will, robbing him of his right to choose).
- Give the person his wish (but this would mean separation from God and all that is good, that is, existence in outer darkness, or Hell).
- Create a nice place where sinful, unsubmitive people could go and continue to be sinful and unsubmitive but be as happy as they can be in this state (but this would violate God's justice and be unfair to those who had gone all out to do what was right).
- Just annihilate him (but then he wouldn't pay for the wrongs he did commit; people could literally "get away with murder").

*Even the Son of Man did not come to be served.  
Instead, he came to serve others.  
He came to give his life as the price  
for setting many people free." —MARK 10:45, NIRV*



*He suffered the things we should have suffered.  
He took on himself the pain that should have been ours.  
But we thought God was punishing him.  
We thought God was wounding him and making him suffer.  
But the servant was pierced because we had sinned.  
He was crushed because we had done what was evil.  
He was punished to make us whole again.  
His wounds have healed us.*

*All of us are like sheep.  
We have wandered away from God.  
All of us have turned to our own way.  
And the Lord has placed on his servant  
the sins of all of us. —ISAIAH 53:4–6, NIRV*

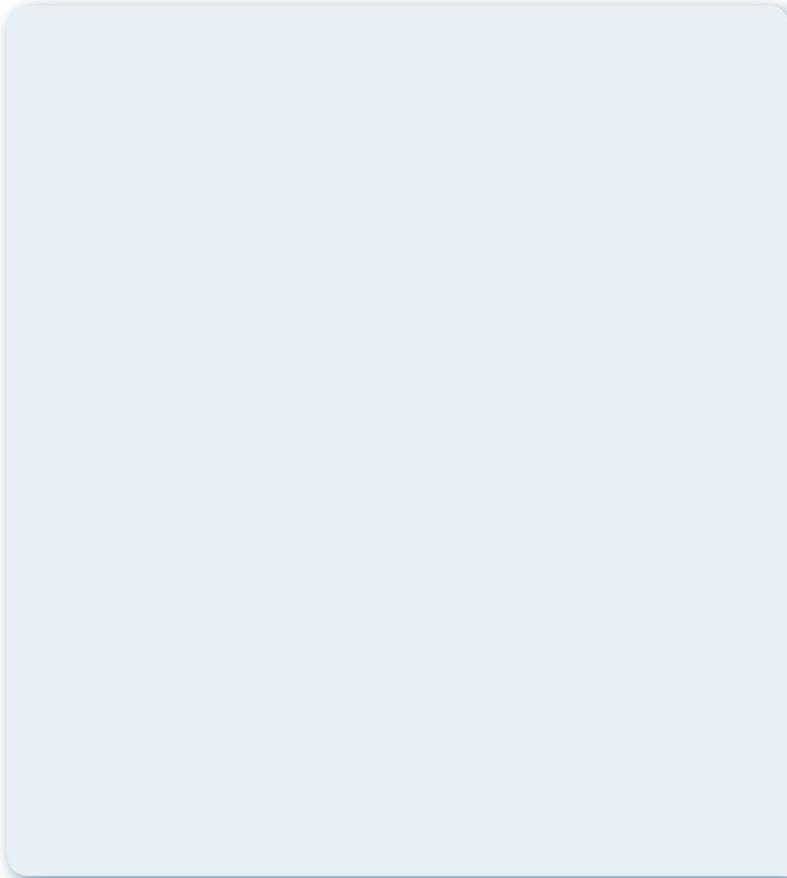
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## FOR REFLECTION

What we suggest here may be difficult. But to get an honest assessment of your situation, you might decide to try it despite the difficulty.

To make the most of this time, have a glass half filled with clean water, and a cup of black coffee, cola, or some other dark drink.

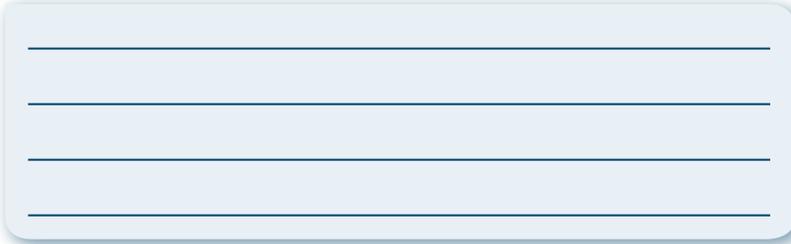
Make a list of the bad stuff you've done. Think about different stages of your life—childhood, high school, college, your young adult years, and so on. Write down whatever unkind, selfish, or harmful things that strike you. It may be as “small” as teasing the neighborhood nerd or stealing pocket change from your mom’s purse. It may be as “big” as getting your girlfriend pregnant or screaming profanities at your kids. Take your time. Don’t rush. You won’t have to show this page to anyone. So whatever comes to mind, write it down.



James 4:17 says, “Well, remember if a man knows what is right and fails to do it, his failure is real sin” (J. B. Phillips, *Translation of the New Testament, The New Testament in Modern English*). If this is true, then what “failure-sins” would you have to add to your list? What should you have done in each stage of life, but didn’t? Helped your mom more? Been nice to the neighborhood nerd? Volunteered your time for some worthy cause? Spent time building up your kids? Again, take your time. Mull over things you knew you should have done but neglected.

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How do you feel about your list? What is your reaction?



If a person did something wrong just five times a day—(tell a white lie, gossip about a coworker, blow up at the kids, ignore the nudge to do something good, like call Mom or encourage a friend)—in fifty years this person would have accumulated more than 90,000 offenses!

Would you guess your average number of shortcomings a day to be less than or more than five?

less than five     more than five     way more than five!

Take your glass of clean water. Add to it the amount of coffee or cola that you think represents how much bad stuff you have done in your life. Try to be honest. (If you're not honest, then you have to add dishonesty to your list too!)

So, how dark is your cup?

What will you do with the dark stuff inside?

Look back over the Scriptures that were read during the discussion (Luke 23:33–47; Mark 10:45; Isaiah 53:4–6). What are these passages saying to you now?

Keep your glass and its contents as a visual reminder until our next session. If you are willing, bring it with you to the next gathering.

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