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## INTRODUCTION

At different points in our lives, many of us wonder why a good God would allow bad things to happen. Without a clear answer to this, it could cause us to question if God still has the whole world in His hands or even if God exists. The Gospel-writer, John, documented an event that sheds light on God's activity, love, and empathy towards us when our lives are full of strife and struggle.

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## PART 5

### VIDEO NOTES

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The story of Lazarus as recorded in John 11 sheds light on how bad things happening to good people doesn't disprove the existence of God, but actually **underscores** the existence of God. Knowing that we will have trouble in this world, we can learn from Jesus' interactions with Mary and Martha and see how He comes alongside us, too, in the presence of our pain.

- Jesus **loves**. John knew that we would need reminders that God loves us when we are in the midst of suffering.
- Jesus gives **light**. When we invite Jesus into our suffering, He gives us the light we need to see purpose in our pain and how He is still trustworthy and good.
- Jesus **listens**. Martha is brutally honest with Jesus about how she feels.
- Jesus **laments**. Jesus shows divine empathy in the midst of Mary's suffering.

In order that people may believe, Jesus raises Lazarus from the tomb. The many people who had come to mourn his death were now witnesses to one of the greatest miracles of Jesus – and they put their faith in Him. Jesus used incredible suffering to bring about proof of His power and love for many.

We may not receive the miracles we want during our seasons of suffering, but this doesn't take away anything that Jesus gave Mary and Martha before He raised their brother. We always have His love, His light, and His divine empathy. In fact, God so loved us that he allowed the worst possible thing to happen to the best possible person for all of our sakes so that we could have peace with Him and eternal life.

**Apart** from the **light of the world**,  
you will never clearly **see** the world.

### **LET'S TALK ABOUT IT**

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1. Is there something in your life or in the life of someone you know that appeared to be heading in a bad direction, but ended up turning out well?
2. Read John 11:17-45, where the apostle John recounts the story of Jesus raising his friend Lazarus from the dead.
  - a. What are some details about this story that would lead a reader to believe this actually happened?
  - b. In verse 35, Jesus showed emotion about this situation. What does the fact that Jesus wept—even knowing Lazarus was about to be raised—say about him?
  - c. Read verse 43. Imagine for a moment what onlookers would have been thinking after hearing Jesus say this. What words come to mind that describe this scene?
  - d. What's your biggest takeaway from this story? What is something that sticks out to you about God when reading this?
3. In what ways does the story of Lazarus parallel the story of God's relationship with people?
4. In your mind, how does the story of Lazarus address the question, "Why would a good God allow bad things to happen?"
5. Do you have a personal example of when something that was tragic helped strengthen your faith? If so, explain.

6. Read John 11:4, where Jesus claims that Lazarus died so that God may be glorified. What about the story of Lazarus can inspire you to have a positive perspective in the midst of difficult circumstances?

## **THIS WEEK**

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Remember, God not only exists in the midst of a world that has evil and suffering, but He chooses to engage with it. God didn't eliminate the evil. Instead, He placed it on Jesus so that we would not perish but have eternal life.

This week, with whatever you are facing, spend some time reading the letter of John, especially the story of Lazarus. Allow yourself to ask Jesus to bring light to your situation, receive His love and empathy, and open your hands to receive His comfort.

"But these are **written** that you may **believe** that **Jesus is** the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by **believing** you may have **life** in his name."

John 20:31