



## More Than You Can Handle: Darkness | April 24, 2019

### Discussion Guide

#### The Scoop

We've all said or heard the common phrase, "God will never give you more than you can handle." But what if we've been lying to people? Hear more about what God has to say about this below.

#### Key Verses

##### 2 Corinthians 1:8-9 (NIV)

*"We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead."*

#### Discussion

Most of us have a similar picture in our heads of the "ideal suburban neighborhood." We think about tree-lined streets, perfectly manicured lawns, two-car garages... everything looks perfect and neat. And if we're being honest, many of us would say that when it comes to our faith, we desire something that looks like that. We like safety. We are enticed by having everything we could ever want, in a place where nothing goes wrong. Unfortunately, that's not what our faith looks like. And when we use the phrase, "God will never give you more than you can handle," we paint a false picture of what it looks like to be in relationship with Jesus.

1. What images do you see when you think of the ideal suburban neighborhood? Is it similar to what was described above? Where do you think we've learned to think that way?
2. Do you desire a faith life that looks like the ideal suburban neighborhood? What is enticing or attractive about it?

In this series, we are looking at a book called *More Than You Can Handle* by Nate Pyle. He writes not only about his own story, but also references people he's interacted with that are in seasons where they are experiencing more than they can handle. In the book, Nate says that "Most of our faith, is a faith that wants Easter without Good Friday." When we tell people that God will never give them more than they can handle, we are forgetting that Jesus died on the cross, and that in this life we will face things that are more than we can handle on our own. The good news, however, is that nothing we experience is too much for God to handle.

3. Do you agree with Nate's statement, "Most of our faith is a faith that wants Easter without Good Friday?" Why or why not? How have you seen this lived out in your own life or someone else's?
4. When is a time or season in your life where you felt like you were dealing with more than you could handle? How did you respond?

In 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, we read an honest message from Paul to the people in Corinth about the trouble and persecutions he and Timothy experienced in the province of Asia. He goes so far as to say it felt like a death sentence. They were out sharing Jesus, but were not received with a warm welcome whatsoever. They definitely felt as though it was more than they can handle. But instead of playing the victim, they realized that the persecution would grow their faith in God, who would rescue and sustain them.

5. How does this passage encourage you in your own times of trouble and darkness?
6. Would your response (being able to rely on God) be similar or different than Paul's if you were in his situation? Explain.

#### What's Next?

Often times, the seasons where we are faced with more than we can handle, are the seasons we finally open our hands and surrender to God. But if we desire this safe "suburban faith," we may be unequipped to lean into God when things get really hard.

This week, as you live out and engage your faith, look for the places that you want Easter without Good Friday. Often times, we ask the wrong questions. We ask, "Why me," and "What did I do to deserve this?" Instead ask yourself, "In the midst of my darkness, pain and suffering, what is right on the other side of it?" Go back and think through your Easter and Good Friday experience. Call to mind some of the places where you are struggling or someone around you is, and lean into God.