

## Session 1

### Talk: Living Well in Difficult Times

#### Introduction

Today we are starting the first of two sessions on living well in difficult times. Most of us would admit that life is getting harder. If we consider life before COVID – only 3.5 years ago – and now, life has gotten more difficult. Everything costs more, people are quicker to get frustrated or angry. People often are quicker to write each other off rather than taking the time to try and understand someone with a different opinion. If we disagree with someone's opinion about one thing, sometimes we are prone to writing someone off altogether. There is more war and conflict in the world – Israel & Gaza, Ukraine & Russia, etc.

What would it look like to live well through this? How do we live well through this? We are going to learn about a few people who have been good examples of this.

#### Talk

This father was told by medical experts that his son essentially didn't have much to offer this world and could live his days in a care home. But the father disagreed with this assessment. Despite his son's limitations, he wanted to love and know his son intimately / deeply and the only way he would be able to do that was to devote his life to spending time with him. So, putting his son in a care home was out of the picture. But it also meant finding ways to spend time together, which he did. You could see the joy on the son's face when he was able to participate in competitions, relying on his dad's strength, his dad's dedication, and love for him. He rose to the challenge and became a willing participant. It took hours and hours of training, spending time together. The son had to get up early for their training sessions too. He had to sacrifice time and energy to this relationship. But the love his dad had for him, the enjoyment from being with his dad, doing things together motivated him to continue.

God, our Heavenly Father, is like this. The thing he most wants to do is be with us, to dwell with us. This is how God created it in the beginning in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. He walked with them in the cool of the day. But rebellion against God and his ways broke the relationship between Adam and Eve and God, and all humans and God. But God desired to restore this relationship with people. He came up with the rescue plan. He

sent his only son Jesus, the only perfect man to live on this earth, to take the penalty of our wrongdoing. Jesus endured a horrific death because he knew this was the only way to restore this relationship for God and man to dwell together, just as the father and son in this video. Jesus endured it because he fixed his eyes on the goal – restoration between God and humans, the enjoyment of being WITH each other, doing things together.

And now, God wants each of you to enjoy this relationship with him. It will require sacrifice, but the rewards are worth it.