

## 7- Heat 1: God in the Real World

Central Point: God understands the full range of joys and sorrows that make up our lives.

**The Big Question:** *What is your situation? What are your burdens, pressures, joys, hardships, temptations, responsibilities, opportunities, and pains—both actual and potential?*

### I. Introduction

A. Opening Questions: (1) What assumptions do people make about suffering? (2) What are some possible ways to respond to suffering?

### B. God's View of My World

### II. Video: Heat 1- God's View of My World

### III. Psalm 88

A. Have you ever hidden a struggle because you were afraid of what people would think of you (or couldn't understand what you were going through)? What was it?

B. List some positive things about this psalm even though it does not end on a positive note?

C. What can we learn from the fact that this psalm was written as a hymn to be sung in worship?

### IV. James 1:1–15

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A. What current trial has caught you by surprise? In what ways did the surprise impact the way you responded?

B. As you think about this particular situation, how can you see God using it to make you spiritually complete? What would you not have without this trial?

C. How has your prayer life changed as a result of this trial? Did knowing that God truly understood change the way you handled your situation?

D. What temptations do you face in the midst of a trial? How does this passage (1:13–15), with its focus on the individual and the heart, alter the way you think about your situation?

E. What has become clearer to you about the goodness and grace of God as you have gone through trials? Has your affection for Christ increased or decreased as a result?

### V. Conclusion

Psalm 88 and James 1 both remind us that the Bible speaks of a real God who meets and comforts real people in the midst of difficulty in the real world.

But, this is incredibly hard because this kind of openness has not always been “embraced” in the local church.

**Make it Real:**

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1. Consider one of your past or present struggles through the lens of this Psalm. Describe what you are feeling. (Support your ideas using verses from Psalm 88.)

- vv. 3–5: You are in deep inner despair.
- vv. 6–7: You feel forsaken by God.
- v. 8a: You have lost your friends.
- v. 8b: You feel trapped and helpless.
- vv. 9–12: You feel like you are dying, crying out for help, but none comes.
- vv. 13–14: You feel as though God has turned his back on you.
- vv. 15–17: You feel like bad things always happen to you and nothing ever changes.
- v. 18: You feel like you wake up every morning to a very dark world.

2. Take some time to think about your life. What is the HEAT in your current situation? Use the questions below to make your responses concrete and detailed.

- What pressures do you regularly face?
- What are your God-given opportunities?
- What are your normal, everyday responsibilities?
- Are you facing difficult circumstances?
- What temptations are you facing?
- Who are the difficult people in your life?
- What unexpected blessings have you received?
- In what situations do you feel alone or misunderstood?
- What challenges does the value system of modern culture present to you?
- In what areas do you feel overwhelmed by the things that have been “assigned” to you (blessing or difficulty)?

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- Are there places where you are tempted to avoid, hide, or quit?
- What situations tempt you to say you are okay when you are not?

3. Do you see any themes or patterns in your answers regarding relational struggles, responsibility, certain temptations, finances, physical suffering, and so forth? In other words, what part of the HEAT of real life tends to get to you? All the categories listed in question 1 are part of every life, but what things, specifically, tend to hook you?

4. Using one of the Bible passages from this lesson, write out a prayer asking the Spirit to help you apply what you have learned to your life and relationships.