

Unexplainable

Week 1 - Lead Sheet

ICEBREAKER

LEADER... Ask these questions to the group. The first one might be better as a popcorn discussion or an all-skate. The second one might be better to go around the room and have everyone answer. The point of this section is to warm everyone up to talking. Feel free to ask light follow up questions to help people engage.

Question: Have you ever found it difficult to pay attention to someone or something? In class? At work? At home?

Question: What is your go to distraction? Social media? Television? People? Something else?

SILENCE

Our lives are busy. Our minds are constantly inundated with information competing for our attention. We want to take a moment to intentionally return our attention to God. One effective method God has given us is silence. So, let's spend 5 minutes in silence together.

Breathe deeply. Quiet your mind. Allow the worries, concerns, and distractions to dissipate from your mind.

LEADER... Set a timer on your phone so that you're not focused on the time. Remind everyone that movement will happen. Sounds will occur. Distractions will take place. It's ok. If your mind is bombarded with tasks, concerns, squirrel... that's fine. Just allow the thoughts to happen and pass through. Utilize the word "peace" as an anchor. Anytime your mind begins to wander simply say the word peace silently to yourself and refocus your attention on Jesus.

Begin by praying this prayer with the group. Start the timer.

"Father, please quiet our minds and still our hearts. Protect us from the distractions that plague our thoughts stirring anxiety within our hearts. Please, fix our eyes on Jesus as we silently come before you to listen. Draw near to us. Allow us to feel your divine presence in our midst. May we be attentive to the still, small, quiet voice of your Spirit."

When the timer stops...

Question: How was that experience for everyone? Was it helpful? Was it weird or difficult?

THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTION

Question: What is LifePoint's reputation around Quincy?

Question: If someone who didn't identify as a Christian spent some time around our community do you think they'd conclude that the God of the universe must be amongst us? In what ways would they see God at work? In what ways would they see us living like any other group of people gathered around some commonality?

LEADER... With this question it can be easy to focus on either the positive or the negative. I imagine there are ways that God seems present among us and I bet there are ways that our lives seem fairly ordinary. Help your group engage with both sides.

ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

LEADER... Say something to the effect of this,

“The author of Hebrews spends an entire chapter recounting the unexplainable lives that ordinary men and women lived by faith throughout the Bible. He then exhorts his readers to follow in suit, but he doesn’t give them a list to accomplish. Instead, he says this...”

Then have a couple of different people read Hebrews 12:1-2 from different translations. These three are particularly helpful: English Standard Version, The VOICE, The Living Bible.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (ESV): *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Hebrews 12:1-2 (The VOICE): *So since we stand surrounded by all those who have gone before, an enormous cloud of witnesses, let us drop every extra weight, every sin that clings to us and slackens our pace, and let us run with endurance the long race set before us. Now stay focused on Jesus, who designed and perfected our faith. He endured the cross and ignored the shame of that death because He focused on the joy that was set before Him; and now He is seated beside God on the throne, a place of honor.*

Hebrews 12:1-2 (TLB): *Since we have such a huge crowd of men of faith watching us from the grandstands, let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back, and especially those sins that wrap themselves so tightly around our feet and trip us up; and let us run with patience the particular race that God has set before us. Keep your eyes on Jesus, our leader and instructor. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterwards; and now he sits in the place of honor by the throne of God.*

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Question: What does the writer of Hebrews want our attention focused on?

Question: What does it practically look like to fix our eyes or attention on Jesus?

Question: In this passage God reveals to us that there are two things that will make fixing our eyes on Jesus more difficult... what are they?

Question: Why do you think the Spirit of God makes a distinction between weights that hold us back and sin?

Question: What are some weights that distract us from Jesus that aren't necessarily sinful?

Question: What are some steps we can take this week to fix our eyes on Jesus?

Question: What are some distractions that we can limit this week to help us keep our attention on Jesus?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Take 15 minutes every day to meditate on Hebrews 12:1-2: think about it, chew on it, ask yourself questions about it, ask the Spirit of God to reveal things about it to you, have conversations about it, share your insights with the group in a text thread.