

Sermon Discussion Guide

Sacred Practices: Presence

Genesis 4:13-14; Revelation 21:1-3

August 31 & September 1, 2019

Part 1: Pray

Every time we study God's word, we should ask God to give us the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts, teach us and mold us into who he created us to be. Ask God to reveal his truth to transform you through your discussion time.

Part 2: Read the Text

Read the passage(s) from the sermon and take note of its truths about God, who we are as his people and what's required to follow him.

Part 3: Reflect on the Sermon

Introduction

1. Continue your conversation this week, along with the sermon series, about pressing back against the culture. Are there more ways that you've recently seen the need to press back against the culture?
2. Would those who know you say that you are in "the resistance" - that is, one is seeking to establish sacred habits in your life.

Sacred Practices: The Longing for Presence.

1. Why is the presence of God so important to us?

2. Ray quoted in the sermon, saying, “We are all born looking for someone looking for us?” Reflect on and talk about the impact of that powerful statement.
3. God created a longing in us for him. We believe that the Bible is a story of the divine presence of God meeting that need. Where are some places we see God’s presence in the Bible? Where have you seen God’s presence in your own life?
4. In the sermon, Ray talked about the immense value of telling our story, particularly the stories of pain, shame and hurt (the times when we felt a lack of presence in our lives). Why do you think it’s so important to tell our stories?

Sacred Practices: The Fight for Presence.

1. Among the long list of things that distract us, our smartphones have become one of the greatest. Where do you see your phone distracting you from presence with God? Where do you see it distracting you from presence with others?
2. Talk with your group about your plan of discipline to remove the distraction of the your phone? (For example, one option is the 3,2,1 plan - 3 hours a day; 2 weeks a year; 1 day a week without your phone.)
3. The aim of mastering our phones is presence. This presence means that we are oftentimes left quiet, allowed to listen and think and acknowledge some important

things in our lives. Where might you profit from this “quiet” in your personal life and relationship with God, along with your relationship with your family and friends?

Part 4: Summarize the Message

How would you summarize the sermon to someone who has never heard it? What are your two or three key takeaways from the message and your discussion?

How does this sermon change your perspective on God? Your own heart? And/or, how to follow him?