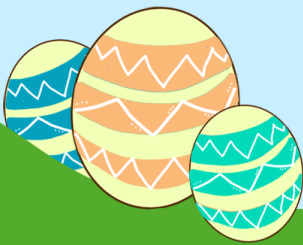


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ENCOUNTER JESUS

Week 26 | THE POWER OF CHOOSING A SIDE | John 15:18-27

TWO OF THE MOST POWERFUL WORDS IN THE BIBLE ARE: FOLLOW ME

I'm sure you have heard the term gaslighting thrown around, but do you know where the term comes from? The term 'gaslighting' comes from the 1944 movie Gaslight. In the movie, an abusive husband brightens and dims gas-powered lights, then insists that his wife is hallucinating, causing her to doubt her sanity. In other words, it's the use of manipulative tactics to confuse someone concerning the truth, even making them question their perception. That seems to perfectly describe the way the world works. The world's system has untethered people from the truth, confusing them. In that confusion, it offers peace and gives war. It offers satisfaction and gives emptiness. It offers hope only to leave people in despair. It offers exhilaration and leaves people in addiction. The evidence of the corruptness of the world system couldn't be more obvious, but the manipulative tactics keep people coming back for more. Even when they know it's not good for them. The only One able to set you free from this is Jesus Christ. When you follow Jesus, He sets you free from the manipulative tactics of the world, drawing you into His kingdom to be a light for His glory and a witness of His love.

Leaders: Take your group through each section: Pray, Reflect, and Reach. Keep in mind the time allowances. In the Reflect section, feel free to focus on several of these questions instead of all as time allows.



PRAY (10 min)

As a Life Group, reflect and pray over this weekend's message. Ask God to show you how you can be a more devoted follower of Christ.



REFLECT (25 min)

As you've had the opportunity to reflect on what God has spoken to you through the lesson this week, consider these questions as a group and discuss them.

1. **Discuss what it means to follow Jesus. Be thorough in your discussion. Use Scripture verses and Biblical examples. Describe what this has looked like in your life. How can you grow as a follower of Jesus?**

FOLLOWING JESUS IS ALL UPSIDE, WITH NO DOWNSIDE. WHEN YOU CHOOSE HIM, YOU DISCOVER YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN CHOSEN.

2. People will have a mixed reaction to you as a follower of Jesus. While the pushback can feel uncomfortable, it means you are impacting someone's life. **How do you respond to people negatively reacting to your faith in Christ? Are you loving? Do you pray for them? Think about the attitude of your heart. Is there someone in your life who is antagonistic to your faith? As a group, encourage one another and give examples of how to respond correctly. Pray for one another since persecution or pushback can leave you feeling marginalized and wounded.**

ENCOUNTER JESUS

IF THE WAY YOU FOLLOW JESUS DOESN'T MAKE ANY UNBELIEVERS UNEASY, YOU HAVE TO QUESTION HOW YOU FOLLOW HIM.

3. While we know our faith works because it is true, people need to see that our faith is true because it works. This is the nature of the pragmatic world that we live in. **Is your faith working? Is it working in your marriage or singleness? Is it working in the sense of having your identity settled? Does it work when your life hits hard times? We are not of this world, but we are in it, and the church shines as an example of what God intended humanity to be. Would the unbeliever see your faith working in the practical areas of your life in a way where they could be led to God's truth?**



WEEKLY MEMORIZATION VERSE

ACTS 5:41

Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

THIS WEEK'S MISSIONAL LIVING TIP:

Make sure your faith works in the key areas of your life. Do a spiritual inventory. Ask people that you trust to give their opinion. Identify those areas where your actions need to be more aligned with your beliefs. Expect people to notice a difference and be faithful to point them to Jesus.



REACH (5 min)

Be praying specifically for the people that are most antagonistic towards your faith. Look for an opportunity to show them the kindness and goodness of God.