

DISCUSSION GUIDE



October 18/21 2018

Abnormal: Be Present

BIG IDEA: Jesus invites us to live fully present lives.

GROUPS VISION

We believe life transformation happens when we engage with other people, with Jesus as our focus, and take next steps together. A next step is where we Ask, Listen, and Respond to take any action that advances our journey with Jesus.

My Story.

An encounter with Jesus leaves a story to tell. Share yours at valleycreek.org/MyStory.

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KEY VERSE

Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

James 4:13-15

POTENTIAL NEXT STEP

Who is one person God is asking you to focus on this week? What choices will you make to intentionally be present with them this week?

MAIN POINTS & SCRIPTURES

Jesus never worried, hurried, stressed, nor did He ever live with regret. He always lived in the present, one moment at a time. **(James 4:13-15)** In Jesus, our lives are marked by faith that Jesus has redeemed our past, hope that He holds our future, and love for our current lives. Jesus invites us to live each moment in the moment, being present while we're present.

Here are three thoughts on how to be present in our lives:

1. **Let go of the past.** The past can be a hook that drags us out of our present. The past is full of guilt and shame; guilt about what we've done, and shame about what's been done to us. Jesus wants to free us from both guilt and shame because He's already dealt with our past. Paul, in the New Testament, had a past that included murder, mocking, and persecuting, but he was able to let go of all of it. Paul knew Jesus had forgiven him. **(1 Timothy 1:12-14)** When we become stuck in the past we become paralyzed in the present. We have a tendency to try to pay off or push away our past, rather than accepting the forgiveness of Jesus and letting go of the past. If we don't let go of our past, we end up wallowing in it. We can keep moving forward in our lives because of Jesus, and the finished work of the cross. **(Job 17:9)**
2. **Trust God with our future.** Jesus knew the Father was with Him every day so He didn't have to be concerned about where He was going to eat or sleep. **(Matthew 6:31-34)** Worry steals our present and makes us fearful of the future. Jesus wasn't worried about the future so He never missed a single moment in the present. Worry is an active state of mind that creates a passive state of being. Sin is simply 'missing the mark' and when we don't trust God with our future, we miss doing the good right in front of us. **(James 4:17)** We can worry about the world around us or we can worship the God in us, but we can't do both at the same time. It should be abnormal for the people of God to worry as though Jesus isn't in control, because He is in control.
3. **Embrace the moment.** The pace of the world seems to be speeding up while our relationships seem to be lagging behind. The systems of this world are built to keep our minds focused on the regrets of the past and the fears of the future. Jesus is inviting us to embrace the moment. **(Isaiah 41:10)** Jesus, the I Am, is with us in every moment, and we experience His Presence in the present. God's name, I Am, is in the present tense because He is presently with us. **(Exodus 3:14)** Wisdom tells us to live in, and embrace, each moment. **(Psalm 90:12)** Jesus embraced every moment by embracing every person in each moment.

DISCUSSION

1. What would your life look like to live fully present without worry, stress, or regret? (Family, work, relationships, etc.)
2. You can worry about the world around you or worship the God in you. Why is it impossible to do both? How can you move from worry to worship?
3. **What is the Holy Spirit saying to you? What is your next step?**