

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE: "I HAVE DECIDED"

**SERIES: THE HYMN STORY | KEY SCRIPTURE: 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 (NLT)**

### ICEBREAKER QUESTION

- **THE POWER OF SONG:** IS THERE A SPECIFIC HYMN OR WORSHIP SONG THAT HAS PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN YOUR FAITH JOURNEY? WHY DOES THAT PARTICULAR SONG RESONATE WITH YOU?

### SCRIPTURE DEEP DIVE

**READ 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 (NLT) TOGETHER:**

*"SO ALL OF US WHO HAVE HAD THAT VEIL REMOVED CAN SEE AND REFLECT THE GLORY OF THE LORD. AND THE LORD—WHO IS THE SPIRIT—MAKES US MORE AND MORE LIKE HIM AS WE ARE CHANGED INTO HIS GLORIOUS IMAGE."*

1. **THE "VEIL" REMOVED:** WHAT DO YOU THINK THE "VEIL" REPRESENTS IN OUR LIVES BEFORE WE DECIDE TO FOLLOW JESUS? HOW DOES LIFE LOOK DIFFERENT ONCE THAT VEIL IS GONE?
2. **REFLECTING GLORY:** THE VERSE SAYS WE "REFLECT" HIS GLORY. IN WHAT PRACTICAL WAYS CAN PEOPLE SEE THE CHARACTER OF JESUS REFLECTED IN YOUR DAILY LIFE (AT WORK, AT HOME, OR IN YOUR COMMUNITY)?
3. **THE PROCESS OF "MORE":** THE VERSE MENTIONS WE ARE CHANGED "MORE AND MORE." WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT GROWTH IS A GRADUAL PROCESS RATHER THAN AN OVERNIGHT TRANSFORMATION?

### KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

1. **THE PARTY IN HEAVEN:** PASTOR MENTIONED THAT HEAVEN THROWS A PARTY WHEN SOMEONE DECIDES TO FOLLOW JESUS. HOW DOES IT CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON YOUR OWN SALVATION TO KNOW THAT GOD AND HIS ANGELS WERE CELEBRATING *YOU*?
2. **"JUST THE FIRST STEP":** MANY PEOPLE VIEW SALVATION AS THE "FINISH LINE." PASTOR SHARED THAT IT IS ACTUALLY JUST THE "FIRST STEP." WHAT ARE SOME OF THE "AWESOME THINGS" OR "MORE" THAT YOU HAVE DISCOVERED IN YOUR WALK WITH GOD SINCE THAT FIRST DAY?
3. **MAKING THE DECISION:** THE SERIES IS TITLED "I HAVE DECIDED." WHAT IS ONE AREA OF YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW WHERE YOU FEEL CHALLENGED TO MAKE A FRESH DECISION TO TRUST GOD OR FOLLOW HIS LEADING?

### PRAYER & APPLICATION

- **APPLICATION:** THIS WEEK, IDENTIFY ONE "VEIL" (A DISTRACTION, A HABIT, OR A FEAR) THAT IS KEEPING YOU FROM SEEING GOD CLEARLY. ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO HELP YOU REMOVE IT.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MADE DECISIONS FOR CHRIST LAST WEEK. ASK GOD TO GIVE THEM A HUNGER FOR THE "MORE" HE HAS IN STORE AND TO SURROUND THEM WITH A SUPPORTIVE CHURCH COMMUNITY.

 **THE HISTORY BEHIND THE HYMN: "I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS"**

THE LYRICS TO THIS BELOVED HYMN ARE NOT JUST POETRY; THEY ARE BELIEVED TO BE THE FINAL WORDS OF A MAN WHO GAVE EVERYTHING FOR HIS FAITH.

- **THE ORIGIN STORY:** THE SONG IS ROOTED IN THE 19TH-CENTURY MISSIONARY MOVEMENT IN **ASSAM, INDIA**. A MAN NAMED **NOKSENG**, FROM THE GARO TRIBE, CONVERTED TO CHRISTIANITY THROUGH THE WORK OF AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSIONARIES.
- **THE ULTIMATE TEST:** WHEN HIS VILLAGE CHIEF DEMANDED HE RENOUNCE JESUS OR FACE EXECUTION, NOKSENG REPORTEDLY RESPONDED WITH THE NOW-FAMOUS LINES:
  - AS HIS CHILDREN WERE KILLED: *"I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW JESUS... NO TURNING BACK."*
  - AS HIS WIFE WAS KILLED: *"THOUGH NONE GO WITH ME, STILL I WILL FOLLOW."*
  - FACING HIS OWN DEATH: *"THE CROSS BEFORE ME, THE WORLD BEHIND ME."*
- **THE MIRACLE OF THE "MORE":** NOKSENG'S FAITH WAS SO IMPACTFUL THAT THE CHIEF WHO ORDERED THE EXECUTIONS WAS MOVED TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST HIMSELF, LEADING TO A REVIVAL THAT SWEEPED THROUGH THE ENTIRE VILLAGE.
- **GLOBAL REACH:** THE WORDS WERE LATER SET TO A TRADITIONAL INDIAN FOLK MELODY (APPROPRIATELY NAMED "ASSAM") BY MISSIONARY **SADHU SUNDAR SINGH**. IT WAS EVENTUALLY BROUGHT TO THE WEST AND BECAME A STAPLE OF THE **BILLY GRAHAM CRUSADES**, SYMBOLIZING A PUBLIC AND PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO CHRIST.

**GROUP DISCUSSION ON THE STORY:**

- NOKSENG'S STORY IS AN EXTREME EXAMPLE OF "NO TURNING BACK." IN OUR MODERN CONTEXT, WHAT ARE THE SMALLER "TURN BACKS" OR DISTRACTIONS THAT OFTEN TEMPT US TO STOP FOLLOWING JESUS?
  - HOW DOES KNOWING THIS HISTORY CHANGE THE WAY YOU FEEL WHEN YOU SING THESE WORDS IN CHURCH?
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