



Sermon Discussion Guide
Here in the In-Between: Essential Decisions
Sunday, July 12, 2020
Based on Pastor Jason's Sermon

Introduction

We're in a series of messages called *Here in the In-Between*. So much of life takes place in the tension between where we've come from and where we're going. Are you in an in-between place in your life? The good news is that God is with you right now, and we have an opportunity in the in-between space we've been given. In this fourth lesson, we learn that we can make good decisions when the future is uncertain.

To watch this week's sermon before your group discussion, go to www.journeyoffaith.com/sermons

Share Your Story

1. What's one thing that distracts you the most from keeping God as your priority?

Hear God's Story

1. Read 1 Peter 4:7, along with Jesus' teaching in Mark 13:32-37. In this in-between time while we wait for Jesus to return, what can we learn from these two passages that God wants us to do today?
2. Go around and hear how different bible translations your group may have translates 1 Peter 4:7. What's Peter specifically saying about prayer here, and what does this realistically look like in our busy lives that are often marked with distraction?
3. Read 1 Peter 4:8. The original Greek word Paul uses for deep or fervent there (ἐκτενής - "ektenēs") literally means to "stretch and endure." Considering this, re-read that verse again. What's Peter saying here considering that context? What's one personal thing that stops you from living this out in your own life toward others?
4. Read 1 Peter 4:12-16. What's Peter saying here about challenges we'll face? And, how does he encourage us to view those challenges?

Create a New Story

1. Spend some simple time with God each day, making it a priority. What might this look like for you this next week?
2. What's one way you can stretch yourself to show deep love for someone in a practical way?
3. How can a challenge you're experiencing help you become more loving, understanding, and more like Jesus?

Further Studies: The Spiritual Discipline of Self Examination

Ignatious of Loyoloa (1491-1556) was a renowned Spanish theologian who's partly known for his writings on the spiritual life. One spiritual exercise he created was called the daily examen. Using this method, we're able to see clearer God's hand in our lives, and use that as a kind of recalibration to live and love others with His heart. Below is a simplified rendition of the examen.

Directions: Have a designated person lead and time each movement for 1-2 minutes each. That person will read each step one at a time, followed by the group quietly contemplating and praying on their own before moving onto the next movement. Once completed, the designated person will close with a very short prayer aloud.

1. Quietly become aware of God's presence. Acknowledge any competing thoughts that are coming into your mind, and put them aside. You'll get to those later. Simply become aware that God is with you right now.
2. Review the day with gratitude. Think of your day from when you woke up until now, and acknowledge as many little things as you can that you can give God thanks for.
3. Pay attention to your emotions. Take a moment to acknowledge how you feel. This may be a single emotion, or many varied emotions.
4. Choose one feature from the day and pray from it. What does God want you to bring to Him right now? Prayerfully bring it to Him, and allow Him to lovingly guide you.
5. Look toward tomorrow. Building from what God has revealed to you so far, look to tomorrow with gratitude while choosing to trust God with it. Then, give Him thanks.

DISCUSS

1. How was that spiritual exercise for you?
2. How can you see this or something like it playing a positive role in your own spiritual life?
3. Is there anything else you'd like to share with your group that came to light during this exercise?

For Parents: Repackaging for Youth

1. For those who have young children in the home, what are some ways you could teach this lesson to them that takes into account their age and learning level?

For questions about this curriculum, contact Pastor Matthew Jensen at matthew.jensen@journeyoffaith.com