

DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMER
AT
HILLSIDE

June 25, 2023

A New Resilience ~Jay Kim

This Discussion Guide is designed to help you *think more deeply* about the sermon and *engage with others* through thoughtful conversation, biblical exploration and *allow God to work* in your life as you apply what you discover.

➤ CONVERSATION STARTER

What is your favorite Olympic sport?

➤ EXPLORATION

Do you remember the Olympic swimmer, Michael Phelps? Over his career he won 28 medals and is the “winningest” Olympian of all time. He was wildly successful and widely celebrated throughout the world. But on September 30, 2014, Phelps was arrested for driving under the influence. He later spoke openly about the depression he faced after the competition was over.

“Think about the rollercoaster ride prior to the Olympics, and just how fast and hectic that mad dash is. This... hundred-mile-per-hour ride comes to a screeching halt the second the Olympics are over... [the athletes] are just exhausted; it was such an onslaught to their system. And when it’s all said and done, they’re depleted.”

~ Scott Goldman (Psychologist, University of Michigan)

Most of us aren’t Olympic athletes. But in this season, many of us feel like we’ve gotten out of the pool after swimming 400 meters...we’re exhausted and depleted.

Recent Surveys by OnePoll¹ & Pew Research²

- **60%** of adults say they’re **more tired than they’ve ever been**
- **58%** of adults say they feel **unfocused** or **disjointed** most of the time

In what way does this resonate with you?

In the ancient world of the New Testament, there was a city with a similar fast-moving, progress-oriented ethos. That city was called Corinth.

Corinth was situated between the Aegean and Adriatic seas which made it an ideal location for trade. Early on the city was mostly populated by freed-persons, meaning people who had once been slaves but had obtained their freedom. In Corinth there was an amazing opportunity to “climb the social ladder.”

Corinth embodied the progress-oriented culture of our day, resulting in a population full of exhausted and depleted people who were constantly chasing but never arriving. It is to the people of Corinth that Paul writes:

2 Corinthians 4:7-9 (From your bible, read aloud)

In what part(s) of your life do you feel depleted or exhausted?

1

<https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/22112-exhausted-nation-americans-more-tired-than-ever-survey-finds>

2

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/02/26/almost-seven-in-ten-americans-have-news-fatigue-more-among-republicans/>

So, what do we do about it? First, what many of us need is rest, specifically sabbath. But there's something else we need and that is *RESILIENCE*. We can change our perspective to see life with all its challenges as a gift rather than a burden.

2 Corinthians 4:7 (From your bible, read aloud)

In the Greco-Roman world, it was common practice to hide valuable items in cheap clay jars. Life is a gift from God but when we're depleted, it's hard to see past the ragged outer shell of our ordinary, exhausting days and recognize the treasure that is the very next breath you take.

"Nobody wants to show you the hours and hours of becoming. They'd rather show you the highlight of what they've become." ~ Angela Duckworth

We cultivate resilience by resisting the allure of highlights and embracing the hidden treasure within the ordinary rhythms of the one life we've been given.

What are the ordinary rhythms you practice that help you see life as a gift?

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (From your bible, read aloud)

There is a common misconception that Christians are always "happy shiny people", when in reality, the bible is the most honest, most sober assessment of human experience in history. The way of Jesus gives meaning to our suffering which in turn flips the suffering upside down.

"Suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice."

~ Viktor E. Frankl (Man's Search for Meaning)

The question, "Why am I suffering?" can be asked in two ways, inward and outward.

- **Inward** - Why is this happening to me?
- **Outward:** How might this bring God glory and good to others?

It is important to note that God is not causing the suffering, but he can redeem it.

Philippians 1:12-14 (From your bible, read aloud)

Paul doesn't despair in his suffering; he finds meaning in it and focuses it outward for God's glory and the good of others, which leads him to remarkable resilience.

Philippians 1:11-13 (From your bible, read aloud)

On a scale of 1-10, how content are you right now?

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (From your bible, read aloud)

We cultivate resilience by living outward in the midst of suffering, choosing sacrifice over self-preservation.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (From your bible, read aloud)

In the upside-down, inside-out kingdom of God...

- What looks like decay on the outside can become renewal on the inside
- What feels heavy and forever is actually light and temporary
- There is an eternal glory that outweighs whatever obstacles we face today.

Which of these truths is the most encouraging to you right now? Why?

> TAKE AWAY

This week, *Focus on **gratitude** by choosing **one gift** from God in your life and **meditating** on it, **appreciating** it, and **thanking** God for it daily.*

*This week, Focus on **meaning** by considering **one hardship** in your life and asking the question, "How might this **bring God glory** and **bring good to others**?"*

Many of us feel exhausted and depleted, but whatever obstacle you face, remember what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:16b "**Do not lose heart.**"

Take some time to pray together, asking God to help you see your life as a gift as you cultivate gratitude and resilience throughout the coming week.