

WEEK TWO | WHEN LIFE IS OUT OF CONTROL, GOD ISN'T

INTRODUCTION

In Sunday's message, Brad described a specific response to feeling out of control with his life. (Re-organizing the garage.)

Think of a time when you felt like life was totally out of control.

- To the degree your comfortable, share about how you responded to that feeling.
- What is your typical response to "disruption" or negative circumstances? Do you tend to over-react or under-react?

In the teaching, Brad shared a theory to why we oftentimes react in unhealthy ways. He said,

"We profess that God is Sovereign. That God has the whole world in His Hands. We actually believe and live as if we are sovereign and must carry the whole world in our hands. Or at least our part of the world."

Do you agree with this sentiment? If not why?

START WITH SCRIPTURE

REVIEW ESTHER 1 & 2 OBSERVATIONS

The story of Esther is hopeful in that it gives us a better Theology of God's Sovereignty and is helpful because it shows us ways to practice this Theology.

1) What are some examples of how we can see God at work, even when he seems invisible in Esther 1 & 2. Take your time. Review the text. What do you see?

Do you relate to this today? If so, how?

"The author of Esther is telling a story, that is telling a bigger story."

2) What examples and literary devices have you noticed?

PRACTICE

How do you respond when life feels out of control?

Most of the time, we react. Some of us **over-react**. We lash out. We buy something ridiculous. We make impulsive decisions. etc.

Some of us **under-react**. We shut down. We numb our senses with alcohol, food, Netflix, scrolling the internet, and so on.

What if there was a better option? When we train ourselves to Purposefully Pause instead of Emotionally React, we discover a pathway to experiencing God in the chaos and confusion of life.

DELAY your first impulse. Delay sending that email or text. Delay making a choice. Resist the tyranny of the urgent. Reject the pressure of perception.

Impulsivity, panic, and the lack of patience are the key ingredients in the recipe for regret.

GROUP DISCUSSION: Share a specific area in which you need to learn to "delay" your impulse.

EVAMINE What is going on inside of me? Why am I tempted to react this way? What is the story I'm telling myself? Suggestion: The Prayer of Examen (In the Fellowship West App)

GROUP DISCUSSION: Who has attempted the Prayer of Examen? How has it been helpful?

REORIENT Yourself. Take a deep breath. Move toward a non-anxious presence. What do I know to be true? **What I Know is true > What I feel** What does the Gospel say about this situation? Who am I in Christ?

GROUP DISCUSSION: Someone share an example of a time, where if you would have deployed these questions, you may have responded differently.

PRAY for Calm, Wisdom (James 1:5), and Courage to obey God.

GROUP DISCUSSION: Stop and do this right now for each other.

SEEK wise counsel from...1) Wise, Spirit-filled people 2) Someone who **doesn't need you**.

GROUP DISCUSSION: Name someone who fits the description above.