

Guest Speaker

Do You Ever Wonder Why You Do What You Do? – Steve Carter

August 1, 2021

Group Creed

We come together as a Group with the goal of Spiritual Formation--encouraging one another to become the same kind of person that Jesus is, so that we can live out every part of our lives inside of His Kingdom.

// Bible References

Romans 7:15; Esther 3:1-15

// Message Summary

This week's message from guest speaker Pastor Steve Carter asks us to consider, 'Do you ever wonder why you do what you do?' In this message, Steve invites us into the Book of Esther: the story of a young Jewish girl who became a Persian Queen, and her adoptive father, Mordecai. In this story, Mordecai's faithful refusal to bow down to honor the king's royal official caused an outrage - and for this one man's slight the entire Jewish population was ordered to be killed. Using this extraordinary and over-the-top royal decree as an illustration, Steve reminds us that we all can react in ways that seem excessive, extreme and unreasonable, leaving us and those around us wondering why we do what we do. Rather than let our triggers hurt us and others, Steve pushes us to 'look for the thing beneath the thing' - and have the courage to allow God's grace to make us whole, holy, and spiritually healthy.

// Community Questions

1. Have you ever had a moment when you realized you were completely over-reacting to something small? Describe what happened.
2. Have you ever had something seemingly small - like a pothole - cause a giant, sinkhole-sized problem? Describe what happened.

// Discussion Questions

1. As a group, read all of Esther chapter 3. In your own words, retell this chapter.
2. In verse 15, the people living in the city of Susa were 'bewildered'. Why was this?
3. Steve spoke about the acronym THING:

Triggers: the event that sets us off.

Hideouts: where we run to escape our pain.

Insecurities: the false stories we create about ourselves.

Narratives: the false stories we create about others and, finally

Grace: God's work to make us whole.

Which ones are immediately recognizable to you in your own life? Why do you say that?

4. What is the impact on yourself - and those you love - when you allow yourself to react inordinately, excessively, and unreasonably to events around you?
5. Mordecai responded differently when he was threatened (Esther 3:2-4). Why was he able to respond in such a way? What would it take for you to respond similarly?
6. Though our world can be threatening and uncertain at times, Isaiah 42:3 shows us the promise of Jesus' grace towards us. What is it?

// Challenge

Give time to consider a Trigger, Hideout, Insecurity or Narrative in your life to which God has drawn your attention. Write it down, and then write down your thoughts to these questions:

- Where do you think it came from?
- What is your typical reaction?
- In responding like this, what might you be trying to protect?
- How can God be your Strength, Protector and Healer here, rather than your own efforts?