



Group Leader Guide “The New Normal” - The New Normal April 18-19, 2020

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.

// Message Summary

Teaching pastor, **Ben Foote**, kicks off a new series called **The New Normal**. While many of us are longing for the world of the “old normal,” this strange time has given us an opportunity to reevaluate what has and hasn’t been working in our lives. We are realizing that the old normal isn’t everything it was cracked up to be. The status of our relationships has come into sharp focus. What gave us our identity, be that work, money, or success, has failed us. Using **Psalms 18:16-19**, Ben digs into what God has for us when the walls seem to be closing in.

// Biblical Background

Psalms 18: This psalm can also be found in **2 Samuel 22**. Writing songs was a way to “celebrate and commemorate” military victories. These types of songs were common in the ancient world. David (ca. 1000 BC) wrote this one after all of his enemies were finally defeated. His predecessor, Saul, was gone, and David had finally succeeded in defeating the Philistines, whom he had been fighting his entire life. In fact, this song, as recorded in 2 Samuel, comes directly after the record of David and his men killing four more Goliath-like giants (**2 Samuel 21:15-22**, also found in **1 Chronicles 20:4-8**). Interestingly, David’s military career is, therefore, bookended with the killing of Philistine giants.

// In Preparation

This weekend’s talk kicks off a new series where we will be looking at different areas of our lives and how they have been affected by the new, strange way of life in which we now find ourselves. We will be examining the “old” way in which we viewed these areas, as well, to see if they were indeed working before all of this started. This week sort of serves as an introduction to the series, so we don’t go too in-depth into any one area. In the coming weeks, some of the areas we will look at include relationships, finances, and identity. The discussion questions this week are aimed at helping identify which specific areas your group members have the most anxiety or questions about. Be thinking about this for yourself, as well. Be able to identify where you feel anxious, fearful, or lonely. And while you don’t have to have a pretty bow on the end, be ready to share where you find your hope in the midst of all of this. Perhaps it is a specific passage of Scripture or some knowledge about God. Whatever it is, continue to hold onto it and be willing to share it with others to perhaps offer them some hope as well.

// References

Walton, John H., et al. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. InterVarsity Press, 2004.



Group Discussion Questions

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// Bible References

Romans 8:28; Psalm 18:16-19

// Community Questions

1. What was your reaction to the surprise ending of the sermon video?
2. What was one thing you did this week that was in service to someone else?

// Core Questions

1. Where do you currently feel that “the walls are closing in on you” in your life? Relationships? Job? Finances?
2. What area or areas of your life have you realized weren’t exactly working in the “old normal”?
3. What were you taking for granted before in the “old normal”?
4. How will that affect the way you live going forward, once all of this calms down a bit?
5. Read **Psalm 20**. What were you trusting to take care of you during the “old normal”?
6. What hope does **Psalm 18** and **20** give you in the midst of your current circumstances?
7. What questions do you still have that seem to be going unanswered?
8. How can this group be praying for and supporting you over the next week?

// Challenge

God promises that if we seek Him, we will find Him (**Jeremiah 29:13**). A great way to seek Him is through reading His Word, the Bible. This week, during all the craziness, uncertainty, and fear, find time each day to spend time reading the Bible. It doesn’t have to take a huge chunk of your time. Just a couple minutes a day is enough to hear from God, though you can absolutely read more. I would suggest finding one passage of scripture that gives you hope and reading it over and over. Come back to it each day. God’s Word has a way of revealing new truths and teachings, even if we have read something 1000 times! And re-reading it over and over helps us to memorize it and take it with us wherever we go. Perhaps you already have a go-to scripture. If not, one I have been reading lately is **Psalm 121**. Start there if you don’t know where else to start or feel intimidated by the sheer size of the Bible. Come back next week, ready to share what God has been teaching you.