



## Group Leader Guide “Marriage” - The New Normal May 9-10, 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

**Jim Burgen** continues “**The New Normal**” with a talk about marriage. However, it is really about anything that we put in the place of God, hoping that it can fulfill us in some way. He brings up the notion that crisis doesn’t build character; it reveals it. We build character and prepare for crisis by fixing our eyes on Jesus and staying close to Him. That way, whenever something bad happens or someone or something lets us down, we have a solid foundation of truth and hope to stand on that will not fail us. He finishes up by giving us a practical way to set our eyes on Jesus using **Psalm 23**.

### // Biblical Background

**Colossae:** Jim references a verse from the Book of Colossians in the New Testament. He mentions that this was a letter written by the Apostle Paul to a group of believers in the city of Colossae. It was probably written around 62 AD. The goal of the letter was to refute a certain false teaching that had taken root within the church in Colossae. It seems that someone (or multiple people) were spreading a particular type of mysticism, claiming to have special insight into the spiritual realms. Their teachings were not supported by the Old Testament (the only canonized Scripture of the time), or the teachings of Jesus or the Apostles. They had essentially taken their eyes off of Jesus and were leading people astray with worldly

teachings, claiming them to be spiritual. Paul counsels the Colossians at the beginning of chapter 3 to set their minds on things above instead of things of the world. In doing this, the various areas of their lives would be on a solid foundation.

**Psalm 23:** Perhaps the most famous of the psalms, this was written by King David, who lived ca. 1000 BC. In this psalm, David compares God to a good shepherd and a generous host. It is “usually classified as a psalm of confidence in the Lord’s care.” The shepherd and host comparisons draw God in a very personal light.

### // In Preparation

Similar to last week, while this message was written and given with married couples in mind, Jim makes it very clear that the application is universal despite anyone’s marital status. So, be ready to challenge (with love and grace, of course) those in your group that may wish to sit this one out! The challenge this week echoes Jim’s challenge from the message to meditate on and hopefully memorize all of **Psalm 23**. As a leader, I would encourage you to take this very seriously and do your best to memorize the entire psalm, as well. Your group will respond better knowing that their leader is doing their best in trying to fix their eyes on Jesus.

## // References

*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version: the ESV Study Bible*. Crossway Bibles, 2008.

Jim mentioned the book *Life Without Lack* by Dallas Willard (which I have quoted from extensively over the past few months. Great minds think alike, I guess!). Here is a link to buy that book on Amazon, if you so wish (copy and paste if the link doesn't work):

[https://www.amazon.com/Life-Without-Lack-Living-Fullness/dp/1400208211/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=life+without+lack&qid=1588970884&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Life-Without-Lack-Living-Fullness/dp/1400208211/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=life+without+lack&qid=1588970884&sr=8-1)

## Group Discussion Questions “Marriage” - The New Normal May 9-10, 2020

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### // Bible References

Hebrews 12:2-3; Colossians 3:1-2; Psalm 23

### // Community Questions

1. If Netflix were to do a documentary of your romantic life, what would the title be?
2. How did you “embrace the mundane” and “show grace in the insane” this past week?

### // Core Questions

1. What area, or areas, of your life were most relevant as you listened to this week’s message? (If you are married, focus on that.)
2. In the “old normal,” how were you putting your faith or hope in that area of your life?
3. How is your current relationship with God? How are you doing at fixing your eyes on Him?
4. What are you afraid that you might need that God won’t provide?
5. Play out the worst-case scenario of your fears regarding your answer to question 1. Explain it to the group.
6. What would it look like for God to take care of you even in the midst of the worst case scenario of your fears?
7. Read **Psalm 23**. What can you do this week to change your mind and start to believe that, even if the worst-case scenario were to happen, God is your Shepherd and will always take care of you?
8. If you genuinely believed the words of Psalm 23, what difference would it make in your life and the lives of the people closest to you?

### // Challenge

Read **Psalm 23** every day this week. Maybe even a few times a day (it’s short). Then, try to recite it word for word from memory. Let the words of one of, if not the, most famous Psalms start to sink in and transform your life. We often skim over the most famous parts of the Bible because we think we have already learned everything there is to learn from them. But, the Bible is a living, breathing communication from God to you. He is always trying to teach you something through His Word. So, this week, take up Jim’s challenge and try to not only memorize **Psalm 23** but reorganize your life as if it were actually true. Come back next week ready to discuss how it went and if you noticed anything different in your life. Bonus points to those that can recite all of **Psalm 23**!