



TURN *the* PAGE

SESSION 9 - FROM APPREHENSION TO ANTICIPATION

MESSAGE BIG IDEA

Turn the page by allowing the words of Jesus to transform my life.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 7:24 – 29

ICEBREAKER & OPENING THOUGHT

The point of these questions is to get your group thinking about the power of words. Since the discussion will move towards the power of Jesus' words to inspire, challenge, and transform us, help nudge the conversation to the ways words can inspire, transform, and encourage. It may be helpful to think of something a person has said to you that has made a difference in your life.

BIBLE DISCUSSION

There's a lot of Scripture to read here, so depending on the time, you may want to cut back on some of the reading. It will be natural for people to get hung up on Matthew 5:48 and the perfect language. It may be helpful to know that perfect can also mean complete or mature. We tend to think of moral perfection, but that's probably not what Jesus had in mind. Help people imagine what their lives could be like if they could live in the world in a non-anxious, loving, trusting, and generous way. What difference would that make in their relationships, at work, and in their overall approach to life?

LIFE APPLICATION

Some of Jesus' teaching might be confusing to us because of our cultural differences. We've included a few points that might help your group think about the creative way of life Jesus calls us to live. The best way to begin trusting in Jesus is to do what he says. So instead of harboring bitterness, figure out how you can have compassion on someone who has wronged you. Instead of getting even with another person, how can you "kill them with kindness" as the old saying goes? Part of what Jesus is saying when he talks about going to the extra mile is to be creative in how you respond to people who wrong you. For instance, it was lawful for a Roman soldier to force you to carry their things for a mile, but not for two. Jesus says, go two miles, which would change the power dynamic between you and the soldier. For someone to hit you on the right cheek would have meant they backhanded you, and would be treating you like an inferior person. To turn the other cheek is to say, "do it again, but this time hit me as your equal." To hit back is to keep the evil in circulation. Jesus is asking the question, "how can you be creative in how you interact with those who are spitting in your face?" It may take time for your emotions to catch up to your obedience, but once we begin to practice the words of Jesus and turn to him in prayer, that's when our feelings catch up to our practice.

CHALLENGE

This season is about celebrating Jesus, who was born to save us from our sins and transform our lives. He came to do this even though we can be full of doubts, fear, apprehension, and sin. Matthew tells us that Jesus is Immanuel, God with us at the beginning of his gospel and then at the end, Jesus says, "Surely I am with you to the very end of the age." That's a point Matthew doesn't want us to forget. Jesus has made a promise to us, and his words have the power to change us, but he doesn't just leave us alone to figure it out for ourselves, he is with us through his Spirit, and when we live by faith in him, our lives will be changed to be more like his.

What is one small thing you can add to your day that will help you remember to trust in Jesus more? It could be a note or a reminder on your phone to do something as simple as praying about this for a few minutes.