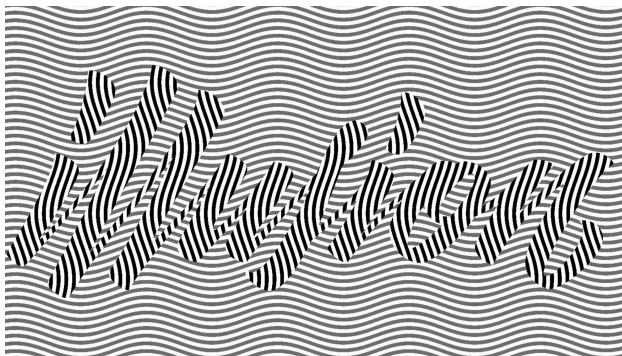


Discussion Questions for the week of September 25



BIG IDEA: Just as a magician chooses to reveal something only when he wants to reveal something, we tend to “put on a show” with our lives and not be identified in the freedom of Jesus Christ. We make it seem like everything is ok, but it is just an illusion, we put on a fake smile or live in a false identity. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians that we are new creations, “the old has gone, the new has come.” We can live in freedom if we stop living the illusion and be identified in Christ.

Everyone feels sorrow. Everyone has something they run to in order to find happiness. In our sorrow, insecurity, hurt, loneliness, etc. we try to cope with our feelings by trying to escape to find happiness. But Jesus is our escape where we find life, hope, and freedom. We don’t have to hold on to our sorrow and live the illusion any more.

ICE BREAKER:

If you could go anywhere in the world right now, where would you go?

DISCUSSION:

1. Why do we try to cope?

We feel bad and search for something to fill us with happiness and satisfaction

2. What are some reasons for why people cope and try to find happiness?

Sorrow, stress, insecurity, sadness, hurt, fear, depression, loneliness, we want to feel

3. Escape as a coping strategy is defined as “going somewhere else in an attempt to get away from your sorrows”. What are some examples of things people might run to in an effort to escape their sorrow?

Getting drunk or using drugs, looking at pornography, overeating, overworking, over-exercising, over-activity, obsessing over looks, addiction to media, changing circumstances (quitting a team, changing schools, backing out of a commitment), eating disorders, shopping, Busyness

4. Read Ecclesiastes 2:1-11. Solomon had everything anyone could ever ask for, but it was never enough to satisfy. What does Solomon say after he pursues all kinds of pleasure?

He says it is all vanity, it is all worthless, it is like chasing after the wind.

5. If we pursue these kinds of things like Solomon, will it give us happiness? What will it leave us with? Why?

It will leave us with a lot of scars. It imprisons us more than allowing us to find freedom.

6. Jesus laid his life down and took our scars on his back so that we don’t have to. He has holes in his hands and feet and side so that we don’t have to be in a hole with our sorrow but can be identified in Christ and be filled with His grace. Read Romans 5:1-5. When we suffer, what does Paul call us to do because of Jesus instead of escaping in our sorrow?

Continue, persevere, press on

Suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope.

APPLICATION:

7. Everyone feels sorrow. Everyone tries to find happiness by escaping to the things of this world. We all have sorrows, and insecurities that make us feel bad and we try to trick ourselves that that something other than Jesus can satisfy. This is an incredible opportunity to be held accountable and be community to each other. Where do *YOU* run to for escape? What is your go-to coping strategy?

8. The gospel does not call us to focus on not sinning, but calls us to run to Jesus to find life, hope and freedom. How are you “running to Jesus” right now?

9. How can you escape your normal daily routine and be with Jesus this week instead of escaping to the world when you feel sorrow?