

For the Joy - Guide (April 14)

Part 4 / The City

Go over the rules of Group Discussion:

- Use 'I' statements. These statements break denial structures.
- No rescuing people as they are speaking. Do not finish someone's sentence if they start struggling to find words. Let them fully process their thought; it might be the first time they are wrestling with something
- No side chatter.
- Pray. Invite God to further His kingdom in your group. Ask for blind spots to be revealed in your members' lives.

Reading:

4 "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. 6 Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. 7 But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. 8 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, 9 for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the Lord.

- Jeremiah 29:4-9

11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. 12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. 17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

- 1 Peter 2:11-17

Getting Started

Read the above verses

1. Now that all our For the Joy messages have been given, what has challenged/confronted/impacted you the most? Why do you think that is?

Going Deeper

We want people to be able to voice their thoughts and questions; however, we do not necessarily want to fill those with answers. We will be confronted with what we think we already know about following Jesus versus what the bible says about following Jesus. We will be confronted with whether we are worshiping the Jesus of the bible, or a Jesus we have created in our head. Create an environment where people can just shout out a thought they have.

1. What do you learn about God's character and nature from Jeremiah 29:4-9?
2. What do you learn about God's character and nature from 1 Peter 2:11-17?
3. Now that you know (whatever was said to questions 1 & 2), how will that practically change your life? Give examples.
4. Daniel read a letter from a women who was concerned about not being able to have time with her children and serve the church, city, and world. Have you been similarly wrestling during the For the Joy series? Please share your wrestling.

Application

Confession and repentance is the ongoing theme of the believer's life. As God reveals truth to us, we confess where we have sinned against Him, and change our way to honor Him.

1. Daniel talked about how one of the beautiful things about the body of believers, or church, is that we do not all have to do everything. Each one of us does our part, as God has prompted and equipped us to do, and the whole gets covered. Does that change how you view service to the church, city, and others? Give examples of how.
2. Daniel broke down Jeremiah 29:4-9 and 1 Peter 2:11-17 into three parts: Live, Humble Service, and Stay Faithful.
 - a. Live: Jeremiah 29:5. What does it mean to “live” as an exile? Is there a difference in “living in” and being “located in?” What is the difference?
 - i. How is the Holy Spirit prompting you to “live” as an exile? Give some specific examples of what that looks like for your life.
 - b. Humble Service: Jeremiah 29:7. What does it mean to “seek the welfare of the city.”
 - i. How is the Holy Spirit prompting you to seek the welfare of the city you are exiled in? Give some specific examples of what that looks like for your life.
 - c. Stay Faithful: Jeremiah 29:8-9. What are some lies you anticipate having to ignore as you live out what the Holy Spirit is prompting you to do for the welfare of the city?
 - i. What will help you stay faithful?
3. Has anyone already served the welfare of the city? Tell us what you did and your experience serving.

Transparency & Vulnerability:

If you haven't done so already, split up the men and women in your group.

- Ask if there is anything that needs to be dragged out and confessed before the light of God. Darkness cannot live in the light. Read James 5:16.
- Pray for each other; lay hands on and pray when needed.

