



GOING DEEPER

DISCUSSION GUIDE

AUGUST 26, 2018

Discussion Guide

CONNECTED TO EXPERIENCE

CONNECTING:

45 MINUTES

(THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE YOUR GROUP WITH A WAY OF CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER SO THAT YOU MIGHT PARTNER IN THE WORK GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIVES.)

- IN WHAT WAYS DID GOD MOVE IN YOUR LIFE THIS WEEK? IN WHAT WAYS DID YOU RESPOND TO HIM?
- WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE THIS WEEK? IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, DID YOU INVITE GOD INTO THIS CHALLENGE?
- HOW HONEST HAVE YOU BEEN WITH US? (GRACIOUSLY THANK GROUP MEMBERS FOR THEIR HONESTY IF THEY STATE THEY HAVE HELD BACK.)

GETTING STARTED:

10 MINUTES

- DO YOU STRUGGLE TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH? WOULD YOU ELABORATE WHY THIS MIGHT BE THE CASE?

DIVING INTO THE TEXT:

60 MINUTES

(THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE YOUR GROUP WITH A SIMPLE ROAD MAP THROUGH THE TEXT. FEEL FREE TO USE THESE QUESTIONS IN WAYS THAT BEST FIT YOUR GROUP AND THE DYNAMICS OF YOUR OWN MEETING.)

- USING THE NOTES, DISCUSS THE DEFINITION OF ESCHATOLOGY AND HOW IT ENCOURAGES BELIEVERS TO LIVE WITH HOPE IN THE PRESENT.
- READ 1 PETER 4.7-11 ALOUD. PAUSE. READ THE TEXT AGAIN, SEEKING TO HEAR THESE WORDS AS ONE WHO IS STRUGGLING TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF DIFFICULTY.

- IN WHAT WAYS DOES PETER INSTRUCT THESE BELIEVERS TO LIVE? HOW MANY OF THESE HAVE TO DO WITH RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER BELIEVERS?
- DOES THIS SURPRISE YOU? WHY MIGHT THIS BE THE CASE?
- DO YOU FEEL THAT THE MODERN CHURCH PUTS AS HEAVY AN EMPHASIS ON RELATING TO ONE ANOTHER? COULD YOU ELABORATE?
- ACCORDING TO PETER, WHEN WE CONNECT WITH ONE ANOTHER WE IN FACT EXPERIENCE GOD THROUGH ONE ANOTHER. WHAT WEIGHT, IF ANY, DOES THIS TRUTH GIVE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTING RELATIONALLY WITH ONE ANOTHER?
- IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, MIGHT THE TRUTH THAT WE EXPERIENCE GOD THROUGH ONE ANOTHER SHAPE HOW WE THINK ABOUT AND PRACTICE BEING THE CHURCH?
- CONSIDER TAKING SOME TIME TO CONSIDER, AS A GROUP, HOW YOU EACH MIGHT BE MEETING GOD THROUGH ONE ANOTHER. YOU MIGHT SHARE THESE THOUGHTS WITH ONE ANOTHER AS BOTH AFFIRMATION OF AND COMMITMENT TO THE RELATIONSHIPS YOU HAVE. WHAT, IF ANYTHING, PREVENTS US FROM GIVING THE SPIRIT THIS ROOM?
- CONSIDER CLOSING BY DISCUSSING WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE TO GIVE THE SPIRIT ROOM TO LEAD YOU TO LOVE IN YOUR GROUP.

CONTEXT, BACKGROUND, AND COMMENTARY

ESCHATOLOGY

ESCHATOLOGY IS TRADITIONALLY DEFINED AS THE STUDY OR DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS. HOWEVER, THIS DEFINITION IS VAGUE, LEAVING SOME PEOPLE SCRATCHING THEIR HEADS WONDERING HOW TO DEFINE THE DEFINITION WHILE SENDING OTHERS OFF IN A FRENZIED MANNER TO DETERMINE THE NATURE AND TIMING OF THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT. IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO DEFINE ESCHATOLOGY AS THE DISCUSSION OF THE CONSUMMATION OF GOD'S GOOD, REDEMPTIVE PURPOSES, BECAUSE THIS DEFINITION PLACES THE EMPHASIS RIGHTLY ON GOD AND NOT TIMES, DATES, OR MEANS. ESCHATOLOGY IS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE FAITH JOURNEY BECAUSE WHAT ONE BELIEVES ABOUT THE CONSUMMATION OF GOD'S REDEMPTIVE PLAN IN THE FUTURE WILL SHAPE HOW THEY LIVE IN THE PRESENT.

IN THE EARLY WRITINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, LITTLE ATTENTION IS GIVEN TO WHERE GOD IS MOVING THINGS AND HOW HE WILL TAKE THEM THERE. AT BEST, THE AUTHORS OF THE EARLIEST WRITINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SPOKE OF PEOPLE HAVING A SHADOWY FUTURE EXISTENCE IN SHEOL WITH SOME BRIEFLY MENTIONING THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPERIENCING GOD'S PRESENCE (PSALM 139.8; JOB 19.25-27). IT IS NOT UNTIL THE LATER WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS THAT ONE BEGINS TO SEE A FORMAL DISCUSSION OF WHERE GOD IS MOVING THINGS. EZEKIEL SPEAKS OF A FUTURE RESURRECTION/RESTORATION OF GOD'S PEOPLE (EZEKIEL 37.11), AND DANIEL SPEAKS OF A PERSONAL RESURRECTION/RESTORATION (DANIEL 12.2) AS PART OF WHAT GOD HAS IN STORE FOR HIS CREATION. OTHER PROPHETS SPOKE OF GOD FINISHING HIS WORK IN A SINGLE EVENT THEY REFERRED TO AS THE "DAY OF THE LORD." ON THIS DAY, GOD WOULD JUDGE THE UNRIGHTEOUS AND REWARD THE RIGHTEOUS, A REWARD WHICH INVOLVED THE RESTORATION EZEKIEL AND DANIEL HAD SPOKEN ABOUT. THIS DAY WOULD LEAD TO GOD FILLING THE EARTH AND TAKING HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE AS KING OVER ALL OF CREATION (AMOS 5.18-20; HABAKKUK 2.14; PSALM 93, 95-100). OTHER PROPHETS NOTED THIS RIGHTFUL ASSERTION OF KINGSHIP WOULD TAKE PLACE THROUGH A VICE-REGENT FROM THE LINE OF DAVID, ONE THEY CALLED MESSIAH OR GOD'S ANOINTED (ISAIAH 9.6-7; 32.1-8; MICAH 5.2-4; AMOS 9.11-12). WHEN ONE UNITES THESE ESCHATOLOGICAL THREADS, A HOPEFUL PORTRAIT EMERGES, ONE WHICH PORTRAYS GOD AS MOVING TO RESTORE THE FORTUNES OF HIS PEOPLE AS HE RENEWS HIS CREATION AND HIS RIGHTFUL REIGN. THE TIMING OF THESE ACTIONS IS LEFT VAGUE, BUT THE CONSUMMATION OF THESE ALL CENTER UPON A FUTURE DAY OF THE LORD.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, THIS ESCHATOLOGICAL THREAD FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT FINDS A CENTRAL ROLE IN THE PREACHING OF JESUS. JESUS ANNOUNCED THAT THE TIME SPOKEN ABOUT HAD COME, AND THE LONG-ANTICIPATED KINGDOM OF GOD HAD ARRIVED (MARK 1.14-15; LUKE 11.20). SIMPLY PUT, JESUS POSITED THAT HIS ARRIVAL WAS NOTHING OTHER THAN THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD, THE MOVEMENT OF GOD TO RESTORE THE FORTUNES OF HIS PEOPLE AND TO RENEW HIS CREATION AND RIGHTFUL REIGN. HOWEVER, JESUS MODIFIED THE OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING BY NOTING THE CONSUMMATION OF GOD'S WORK WOULD NOT COME ALL AT ONCE. RATHER, HIS DISCIPLES WERE TO PRAY FOR GOD TO COMPLETE WHAT HAD BEEN STARTED IN THE PERSON AND MINISTRY OF JESUS (LUKE 11.2). THIS MODIFICATION CREATES SOMETHING OF AN IN-BETWEEN EXPERIENCE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE, AN EXPERIENCE WHERE NOW GOD IS MOVING BUT HE HAS NOT YET COMPLETED HIS WORK. THEREFORE, THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS HAD ACCESS TO FUTURE REALITIES OF GOD'S WORK IN THE PRESENT, BUT THE FULLNESS OF THESE REALITIES WAS YET TO COME. THE MINISTRY OF JESUS ON THE CROSS WON THE DECISIVE VICTORY MAKING THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S RESTORATION OF THINGS POSSIBLE (REVELATION 5.5), BUT GOD, IN HIS SOVEREIGNTY, WAS WAITING TO A FUTURE DATE MARKED BY JESUS' RETURN TO BRING THESE POSSIBILITIES INTO THEIR FULLEST SENSE (REVELATION 22.12).

THIS NOW-BUT-NOT-YET THINKING BECOMES CENTRAL TO THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES, SHAPING HOW THEY ENCOURAGED EARLY BELIEVERS TO NAVIGATE THEIR WORLD. THEY ARGUED BELIEVERS COULD LIVE RESTORED LIVES UNDER GOD'S RIGHTFUL REIGN BECAUSE THE LIFE GOD WAS MOVING TO PROVIDE WAS AVAILABLE TO THEM IN THE PRESENT THROUGH THE WORK OF JESUS. HOWEVER, GOD'S PATIENCE IN FINISHING HIS WORK LEFT THE EXPERIENCE OF THE WORLD'S BROKENNESS A VERY REAL PART OF DAILY EXPERIENCE. RATHER THAN RESORTING TO A HOPELESS VIEW BASED UPON THE BLEAK EXPERIENCE OF PRESENT LIFE, BELIEVERS COULD FACE SUCH EXPERIENCES WITH HOPE THAT SUCH EXPERIENCES WERE TEMPORARY BECAUSE GOD WOULD ONE DAY CONSUMMATE THE WORK HE BEGAN IN JESUS.

THE TEXT

1 PETER 4.7-11: *LIVING WITH THE FUTURE IN MIND*

11 PETER IS A LETTER WRITTEN TO BELIEVERS SPREAD THROUGHOUT ASIA MINOR WHO WERE UNDERGOING INTENSE PERSECUTION. WE HAVE NO HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF AN OFFICIAL PROGRAM OF PERSECUTION DURING THE TIME WHEN THIS LETTER WAS WRITTEN. THEREFORE, IT IS BEST TO UNDERSTAND THE PERSECUTION AS LOCAL AND FAMILIAL, PROBABLY TAKING

THE FORM OF SOCIAL OSTRACISM, REJECTION, AND UNFAIR TREATMENT. WHAT PETER MAY HAVE IN MIND IS THE GENERAL REACTION OF PAGAN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES TO THE EARLIEST BELIEVERS, NOT UNLIKE THE MODERN REACTION OF MUSLIM FAMILIES AND MIDDLE-EASTERN COMMUNITIES TO CHRISTIAN CONVERTS FROM ISLAM TODAY. BECAUSE THE FIRST-CENTURY WORLD WAS BASED ON ONE'S STATUS AS HONORABLE OR SHAMEFUL, TO EXPERIENCE THESE FAMILIAL AND LOCAL PRESSURES WOULD HAVE BEEN DEVASTATING BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE RIPPED ANY SENSE OF COMMUNITY, CONNECTEDNESS, IDENTITY, AND SECURITY AWAY FROM THESE NEW CHRISTIANS. THEREFORE, PETER IN WRITING TO THEM EMPHASIZES HOW TO BE THE CHURCH, THE NEW COMMUNITY OF GOD MEANT TO REPLACE THE COMMUNITIES OF THE WORLD, COMMUNITIES WHICH THEY HAD LOST.

KEY TO THIS DISCUSSION IS THE ESCHATOLOGICAL POINT THAT GOD WAS MOVING TO COMPLETE HIS GOOD, REDEMPTIVE PURPOSES WITH THE RETURN OF CHRIST (1 PETER 2.11-12; 4.7). THESE STATEMENTS ASSUME THAT, IN CHRIST, GOD HAD BEGUN TO MOVE TO RESTORE LIFE AND CREATION. THEREFORE, THE LIFE GOD INTENDED FOR PEOPLE WAS NOW AVAILABLE. HOWEVER, GOD HAD NOT FINISHED HIS WORK WHICH WAS LEADING TO THE PRESENT EXPERIENCE OF SUFFERING ON THE PART OF THESE BELIEVERS. BUT, THEY COULD FACE THEIR PRESENT SUFFERING WITH HOPE AND VIGOROUSLY PURSUE WHAT WAS NOW AVAILABLE TO THEM BECAUSE THEY HAD THE ASSURANCE THAT GOD WAS QUICKLY MOVING TO FINISH WHAT HE HAD STARTED. WHETHER THESE BELIEVERS WOULD BE SURPRISED OR SHOCKED THAT ALMOST 2,000 YEARS HAVE PASSED AND GOD HAS YET TO FINISH WHAT HE STARTED IS MERE SPECULATION. WHAT IS KNOWN IS THE PROMISE TO THEM REMAINS RELEVANT TO BELIEVERS TODAY. WE STILL LIVE IN THE FINAL DAYS OF GOD'S GOOD, REDEMPTIVE MOVEMENT. THEREFORE, WE CAN PURSUE, WITH HOPE, THE LIFE HE OFFERS US BECAUSE WE KNOW MORE LIFE WILL BE GIVEN TO US AS WE MOVE TO THE CONSUMMATION OF GOD'S GOOD WORK.

BECAUSE THE DAY WHEN GOD WILL FINISH HIS WORK IS NEAR, PETER ENCOURAGES THE ASIA MINOR BELIEVERS TO REMAIN ENGAGED, TO PAY ATTENTION AND CONTINUE TO SEEK GOD IN PRAYER. IT MIGHT BE EASY TO RELAX AND SAY GOD WOULD DO WHAT HE WOULD ONE DAY DO, BUT TO RESPOND IN THIS MANNER WOULD LEAD ONE TO MISS THE LIFE NOW AVAILABLE TO THEM. THE WORK GOD WAS DOING WAS TO BRING PEOPLE INTO THE FULLNESS OF HIS PRESENCE, BUT NOW THEY COULD EXPERIENCE THIS PRESENCE, AND WERE TO DO SO IN PRAYER. THE WORK GOD WAS DOING WOULD LEAD TO A DEEP INTIMACY (KOINONIA) BETWEEN PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH GOD.

HOWEVER, THIS COULD NOW BE EXPERIENCED EVEN WITH MESSY, IMPERFECT BELIEVERS, SO LONG AS LOVE REMAINED A VITAL AND CENTRAL COMPONENT OF RELATIONSHIPS. GOD WAS MOVING TO CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY, A KINGDOM OF HIS PEOPLE, BUT THIS NEW COMMUNITY COULD BE EXPERIENCED TODAY AS PEOPLE PURSUED GENEROUS HOSPITALITY, WELCOMING AND CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER. FINALLY, GOD WAS MOVING TO LEAD PEOPLE TO AN ETERNAL EXPERIENCE OF HIS GLORIOUS PRESENCE, BUT THIS PRESENCE COULD BE EXPERIENCED IN THE PRESENT THROUGH ONE ANOTHER.

IT IS WITH THE MENTION OF THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S PRESENCE THAT PETER SLOWS DOWN AND EXPANDS HOW THIS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE IN THE PRESENT. THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S GLORIOUS PRESENCE IN THE PRESENT IS POSSIBLE THROUGH SPIRITUAL GIFTS, THE TANGIBLE, OUTER MANIFESTATIONS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN EACH BELIEVER (1 CORINTHIANS 12.4-7). LIKE PAUL, PETER REMINDS HIS AUDIENCE THAT THE VARIOUS WAYS THE HOLY SPIRIT MIGHT MANIFEST HIMSELF ARE BEYOND ENUMERATION. HOWEVER, WHATEVER FORM THEY TAKE, THE BELIEVERS WERE TO TAKE CARE TO DIRECT THEM TOWARD ONE ANOTHER BECAUSE IN SO DOING, THEY BROUGHT THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD TO ONE ANOTHER. THOSE WHO HAD THE GIFT OF SPEAKING SHOULD REALIZE THAT IN THEIR WORDS WERE MINGLED THE WORDS OF GOD. THOSE WHO SERVED WERE TO RECOGNIZE THAT IN THEIR SERVICE WAS INTERMINGLED THE STRENGTH AND POWER OF GOD. BY TURNING THESE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT TOWARD ONE ANOTHER WITH INTENTION, PEOPLE COULD NOW EXPERIENCE A TASTE OF WHAT THEY WOULD EXPERIENCE MORE FULLY IN THE FUTURE, THE PRESENCE AND GLORY OF GOD WHICH SHOULD LEAD THEM TO PRAISE GOD.

REAL LIFE WITH BLAKE:

WE ARE HARDWIRED TO CONNECT, AND EVEN THOUGH GOD HAS MADE THIS POSSIBLE ONCE MORE, MANY OF US HOLD BACK, FEARFUL OF WHAT CONNECTING MIGHT BRING. CERTAINLY, CONNECTING MIGHT BRING AN ASSORTMENT OF NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES, AND WE ARE ABLE TO TICK THEM OFF WITH EASE IN ALL OF THEIR GORY DETAILS. I KNOW THIS IS TRUE FOR ME, BUT I AM BEGINNING TO NOTICE THAT I HAVE TO STRUGGLE TO TURN TO RECOGNIZE THE POSITIVES. I FIND I AM BENT TO THE NEGATIVE ON THIS MATTER. I BELIEVE MANY PEOPLE ARE. TALK WITH SOMEONE ABOUT CONNECTING AND YOU CAN WATCH THEIR EYES GLAZE OVER AND YOU KNOW THEY ARE RUNNING THROUGH AN ASSORTMENT OF REASONS WHY CONNECTING IS NOT A GOOD IDEA. THEY ARE BUSY. PEOPLE ARE MESSY. THEY HAVE OTHER PRIORITIES. I HAVE YET TO FIND SOMEONE WHOSE EYES LIGHT UP WHEN YOU TALK

ABOUT CONNECTING, BUT I AM COMING TO BELIEVE ANY TALK ABOUT CONNECTING SHOULD CAUSE US TO GET EXCITED. YOU SEE, IT IS IN CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER THAT WE ARE ABLE TO CONNECT WITH AND EXPERIENCE GOD.

I KNOW THAT SOUNDS WEIRD, AND POTENTIALLY HERETICAL, BUT I AM ON SOUND BIBLICAL GROUND HERE. TOGETHER, WE MAKE UP THIS THING CALLED THE BODY OF CHRIST (1 CORINTHIANS 12.27). THIS MEANS WE ARE JESUS IN THIS WORLD, WHICH, IF WE CONTINUE TO THINK FORWARD, MEANS THAT EVERY TIME WE ENCOUNTER ONE ANOTHER WE ENCOUNTER JESUS. PETER GETS A LITTLE MORE DETAILED THAN PAUL ON THE MATTER. LIKE PAUL, PETER NOTES THAT GOD DWELLS IN EACH OF US WHO FOLLOW CHRIST AND THAT THE INFINITE GOD WHO LIVES IN OUR FINITE BODIES LEAKS OUT IN ALL KINDS OF WAYS (1 CORINTHIANS 12.4-7). HOWEVER, PETER SAYS THIS MEANS THAT IN THOSE PLACES GOD LEAKS OUT GOD IS PRESENT AND AVAILABLE TO ALL WHO EXPERIENCE THAT PLACE. SO, IF GOD LEAKS OUT IN OUR SPEECH THEN THOSE WHO HEAR US HEAR GOD. IF GOD LEAKS OUT IN OUR SERVICE, THOSE WHOM WE SERVE EXPERIENCE GOD. IF GOD LEAKS OUT IN OUR GENEROSITY, THEN IN OUR GENEROSITY PEOPLE EXPERIENCE GOD. I COULD GO ON, BUT YOU GET THE POINT.

BECAUSE THIS IS TRUE, PETER ARGUES WE SHOULD TAKE CARE TO CONNECT, WITH GREAT INTENTION DIRECTING OUR LIVES TOWARD ONE ANOTHER SO WE MIGHT EXPERIENCE GOD. IT IS HERE THAT CONNECTING BECOMES GOOD. TO EXPERIENCE GOD IS GOOD. WE WERE MADE FOR GOD. HE IS WHAT DEFINES GOODNESS, AND TO EXPERIENCE HIM IS TO EXPERIENCE LIFE AS IT WAS MEANT TO BE. ONE DAY WE WILL STAND AND THE VAST GOODNESS OF GOD WILL WASH OVER US, BUT WE DON'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR THAT DAY. WE CAN EXPERIENCE THIS GOOD GOD TODAY. . . IF WE ARE WILLING TO CONNECT. I SUPPOSE THIS COULD ENCOURAGE ME TO STEP OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE (ISOLATION BUBBLE!) SO I MIGHT EXPERIENCE GOD, BUT PETER REMINDS ME THAT MY STEPPING OUT BRINGS GOD TO PEOPLE TOO! THIS ENCOURAGES ME IN MY CONNECTING BECAUSE IT MEANS I HAVE SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE, SOMETHING OF VALUE TO BRING TO OTHERS. I AM A MEANINGFUL PART OF ANY RELATIONSHIP. FOR ME, THIS MAKES ME FEEL MORE GROUNDED AND SECURE IN MY RELATING. MAYBE IT SHORES UP MY POOR SELF-IMAGE. MAYBE IT HELPS ME SEE BEYOND MYSELF. MAYBE IT TOUCHES A PART OF ME I DON'T HAVE WORDS TO EXPRESS. WHAT I KNOW IS WHEN I CONSIDER THAT IN MY CONNECTING I BRING GOD TO PEOPLE, IT MAKES ME WANT TO CONNECT.

REAL LIFE WITH YOU:

WE WERE MADE TO CONNECT, BUT MANY OF US FIND CONNECTING HARD EVEN WHEN GOD HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE. HURT. FEAR OF REJECTION. PAST EXPERIENCE. THESE AND SO MANY OTHER THINGS RISE UP AS ROAD BLOCKS ON THE PATH OF CONNECTING. ONE MAJOR ROADBLOCK PEOPLE STRUGGLE WITH IS THE BELIEF THAT THEY HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER IN A RELATIONSHIP. PEOPLE HAVE A LOW SELF-IMAGE, ESTIMATING THEIR WORTH AND VALUE TO BE ZERO (OR LESS THAN ZERO!). WHEN THIS IS THE CASE, PEOPLE WILL SAY THINGS LIKE, "THEY WOULDN'T WANT TO TALK TO ME," OR "THEY DON'T HAVE TIME FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME." WE FIND OTHER PEOPLE INTIMIDATING, HAVING AND BEING EVERYTHING WE ARE NOT. IN REALITY, WE EACH HAVE SOMETHING IMMENSELY VALUABLE TO OFFER. IF WE ARE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, WE EACH BRING THE TANGIBLE EXPERIENCE OF GOD TO EVERY ONE OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS. THIS IS THE CASE BECAUSE AS FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, THE INFINITE GOD LIVES IN OUR FINITE BODIES, AND AS SUCH, HE LEAKS OUT. HOW HE LEAKS OUT DIFFERS PERSON BY PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS SOVEREIGN INTENTIONS, BUT HE LEAKS. WHERE HE LEAKS IS WHERE PEOPLE FIND THE TANGIBLE EXPERIENCE OF GOD. THE WONDERFUL THING ABOUT THIS IS PEOPLE LONG FOR GOD. MANY PEOPLE SPEND THEIR LIVES LONGING AND SEARCHING FOR GOD. YOU HAVE THE VERY THING FOR WHICH THEY LONG THE MOST. WHAT GREATER THING COULD YOU HAVE TO OFFER THAN WHAT THEY LONG FOR THE MOST? THE WONDERFUL THING IS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW WITH GREAT CERTAINTY HOW GOD LEAKS OUT OF YOU FOR IT TO HAPPEN. YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE A TEST OR ENTER INTO A LONG PERIOD OF DISCERNMENT. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS BE WITH PEOPLE AND BE YOURSELF WHEN YOU ARE WITH THEM. IN SO DOING, GOD IS GOING TO SHOW UP AND PEOPLE WILL EXPERIENCE HIS LAVISH GOODNESS AND PRESENCE THROUGH YOU.

THIS WEEK, CONSIDER JUST SHOWING UP. SHOW UP AND CONNECT WITH OTHER FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST. DON'T WORRY ABOUT BEING LIKE THEM OR LIKE SOMEONE ELSE. DON'T WORRY ABOUT HAVING ANY SPECIAL ABILITIES OR KNOWLEDGE. JUST BE WHO YOU ARE BECAUSE IN BEING WHO YOU ARE GOD COMES OUT THE BEST!



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