

## **INTRO: COMPELLINGLY BEAUTIFUL**

### **EXPLORATION**

Stunningly beautiful landscapes, fine art and photography are all enhanced by contrast. Contrast sharpens; it better defines the differences.

1. Describe a time when you experienced stunning beauty.
2. In your journey into faith, did contrast and beauty play a role? How?

### **MEDITATION - READ JOHN 1:14**

The incarnation of Jesus allowed mankind to see who God really is—different from the ideas and assumptions ingrained by religion for centuries. Jesus brought beauty and contrast into the world, an experience of God's goodness with blessing. So, God moved into our neighborhood to live with those who didn't know Him and were nothing like Him, encouraging them to experience and know Him – Incarnational Living.

3. Describe your influence (or lack of) on those who don't know God. Specifically, how do they see beauty and contrast in you?
4. With Jesus, belonging ("join me", "follow me") preceded belief. In what ways have we reversed this by putting beliefs before belonging?
5. Jesus went to sinners and sinners went to him as friends. Why?
6. Jesus' ministry was invested "outward" in the world, rarely "inward" in the temple or synagogue. Why do you think our ministry is primarily "inward"?

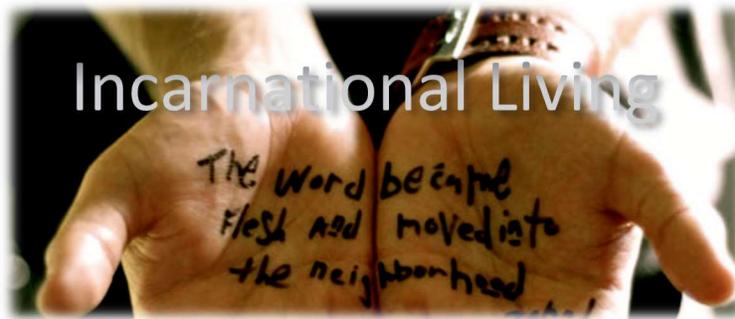
### **CHANGE**

For generations, most American churches had an attractional posture, not an incarnational posture. They provided services and activities that were wanted and valued by some. Today, people don't want or see the need for church. Yet, everyone needs the compellingly beautiful grace of Jesus. Jesus' followers have experienced God. They are compellingly beautiful and their stories reflect the contrast of messy lives infused with God's life.

7. Where could you build relationships with those who need to experience God? Describe your circle(s) of relationships (work, neighborhood, hobbies, hangouts).
8. Do you believe God intends to use you to be a compellingly beautiful experience with Him for someone you are in relationship with?
9. If beauty is experienced when we "*enjoy the soul enlivening experience of looking bad in the presence of love*", are you experiencing beauty?

### **ACTION**

Reflect on this message and discussion, do you want our church to be attractional or incarnational? Will you live a "sent" life in the context of community, community of belonging where people can experience God? Please make this a matter of earnest prayer all week, preparing your heart to act.



## Basic Concepts

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During this series on incarnational living, we will use the following terms, please get familiar with them. Taken from [The Tangible Kingdom](#) by Hugh Halter & Matt Smay.

**Gospel:** the good news of Jesus, capable of transforming everything about a person, their community, and their world.

**Missional People:** individuals actively committed to living a "sent" life in the context of community.

**Sojourner:** a spiritually curious God-seeker; a traveler who has intersected the missional community.

**Incarnational Community:** a group of people with the posture, tone, motives, and heart of Jesus; those who physically represent him in a particular location.

**Posture:** the attitude of the body; the way a person or community expresses itself to others, especially in nonverbal ways.

**Apprenticeship:** Moving beyond knowledge-based discipleship to action-oriented followership, with the goal of living like Jesus lived. This comes through regular practice, faith-oriented action, and personal devotion to know the ways of Christ.

**Living Out:** the natural and deliberate process of living among, listening to, and loving people in culture with the desire to connect them to the Christian community.

**Inviting In:** Integrating sojourners into the community as a result of living out the Gospel with intentional hospitality and compassion.