

Life Trails Small Group Study Guide

Week 14 – Weariness and Celebration

From Sunday, December 19, 2021

Warm Up:

Recharging: What is your strategy when you are dealing with weariness? The following are some ideas. As a group rank them in order of effectiveness – and feel free to add your own ideas!

- Spend some time alone – maybe out in nature
- Get a good night's sleep
- Binge watch something all weekend
- Find a good book to read
- Get away for the weekend (or take a vacation)
- (Re) Connect with a friend / mate
- Attend an event – concert, athletic contest, etc.
- Turn on the music
- Do your hobby thing – like gardening, cooking, painting, wood working, etc.
- Throw a party (seriously)

Discuss the following questions:

- When in life do you feel the most weary? How does it affect you?
- What are the dangers of weariness?

Debrief:

The following were the suggested action steps from the corresponding week. Take some time to debrief on what everyone did, and on what was learned from the experience.

From December 5

- Take a few minutes to examine your past for any instances where you were mistreated – either by others or even by circumstances – and ask yourself these questions:
 1. Have I dealt with this issue(s), or am I still wrestling with the fall-out? How so?
 2. Am I allowing this person's actions to continue to impact me – and how can I break that influence?
 3. Am I trying to prove my worth in some way either to myself or others?
 4. What steps can I take to move on? And what is the first one?
 5. Do I need to include the help of someone else to deal with this?

From December 12

- ***Listen to yourself this week!***

- When you find yourself “playing the shame card” make note of it. What effect did it have? Did it make the situation better or worse?
- When you find yourself “playing the shame card” on yourself make note of it. What truth can you use to push back?

Share your Story:

Have you been “sharing your stories” in your small group? We really want to encourage everyone to engage in that activity!

From the message:

- Five reasons to celebrate were given – God’s presence, God’s favor, God’s story, God’s humility, and God’s redemption. Which resonates most with you and why?
- What does it look like to “live in the moment”? Why is it so hard?
- What in your life has been really good lately?

From the passage: *Read Luke 2:8-20*

- The first angel came with the message for the shepherds – but what role did the great company of angels play? How do they add to the story?
- What was the role of the shepherds? Why do you think they were included in the story?
- The angel announcement included the following words/phrases which are used repeatedly in Luke’s gospel – (*bring*) *good news, joy, people, and Savior* (used only in Luke’s gospel). How do the angels seem to set the tone for the entire book?
- What do you think is the climax of this story (not necessarily the conclusion)?

For discussion:

- By interjecting himself into the human story, Jesus experienced life as we do – including the feeling of weariness. Can you think of instances in the life of Christ when he appeared to be weary? How did he respond?

- There really are no rules of celebration. What does celebration look like to you personally? What should it involve/include?
- How much is celebration a part of your life? Can you share about a celebration that you were a part of that you particularly enjoyed?
- What other stories / references about celebration are in the Bible? Why do you think God emphasized the importance of celebration?
- Both the shepherds and the angels glorified God. What does that mean? And what would that look like in today's world?
- One of the attributes of God that we seldom talk about is joy. What does it mean that God is joyful – and the source of joy?
- Author Richard Foster suggests that celebration is a spiritual discipline. Do you agree or disagree? In fact, he suggests that it is the basis for all other spiritual disciplines. What do you think?
- What would be some practical ideas about practicing celebration more in your life?
- How should celebrating engage us physically, emotionally, mentally, relationally, spiritually?

Activation:

- Plan a celebration this week – big or small, personal or with others. This might be easy with Christmas. Think through what elements of celebration you want to include. Plan to share about your celebration at your next small group meeting!