

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series: Living Like Jesus

The start of a new year is full of possibility; places to travel, goals to achieve, changes to make, new habits to create. There is a steady buzz from our world and culture that says you can live your best life *now* if only you buy this certain program or follow these 5 easy steps. And that noise grows even louder this time of year.

What if instead of asking, what can I achieve this year, we ask, how can I be more like Jesus? Join us this January as we explore different values of Jesus as revealed in the gospels and focus the new year on one simple goal: to live and to love like Jesus.

Message description:

“Our world values big things: big TVs, big trucks, big houses, big stores, and megachurches with big TVs. Jesus on the other hand, seems to value small things” (Larry Stoess, *Think Red*). The kingdom of heaven, in fact, is like a mustard seed; the smallest of all seeds that becomes a large tree where birds can nest and find a place to belong. The kingdom of God comes in small ways, in unexpected places, and from overlooked people. Our task as followers of Jesus Christ is to train our eyes to see the Kingdom so that we might not grow discouraged of doing good in love and good deeds. And so that we don't use the world's standard of success to measure our own spiritual growth as a church or for the Kingdom.

Key Scriptures

Matthew 13:31-33

John 3:1-8

Questions Related to This Week's Message:

1. Why do you think it is hard to celebrate small, humble beginnings?
2. How have you seen the American church fail to align with this value of Jesus and instead value large gatherings, audiences, and budgets?
3. Where have you seen a small beginning of the kingdom lately?
4. What gives you hope for the future right now?

Going Deeper:

Read Luke 22:24-30

**Questions for reflection taken from "Think Red" by Larry Stoess, pg. 94*

In this passage, "the disciples have a dispute about which one of them is the greatest. Jesus settles their dispute by asking a question: 'Who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.' Jesus does not rebuke his friends for wanting to be great; he simply redefines the connotation of greatest."

- Read the story and consider these questions:
 - o What does it mean to be great in the world's eyes?
 - o What does it mean to be great in the Kingdom of God?
 - o What great things or acts of service have you seen lately?

Read Luke Mark 8:22-26

**Questions for reflection taken from "Think Red" by Larry Stoess, pg. 125*

"For many of us it takes a second touch from the hands of Jesus before we see the people around us as more than just objects. When we see people as objects, either standing in the way of what we are trying to accomplish, or as a means to help us achieve what we want, we fail to see the invisible kingdom of God in our midst. We need for Jesus to touch our eyes, a second time if necessary, so we can see the eternal value of every person we meet and the beautiful potential God has placed in the communities where we live. Once we perceive the eternal value of people and places, we will begin to see and articulate a compelling vision worth living for. Here are four different ways to ask the question Jesus presented to the blind man:"

1. If the kingdom of God were to come in its fullness tomorrow, *do you see anything* in your city that would change?
2. When you look at your neighborhood, *do you see anything* that breaks God's heart?
3. When you look at your neighborhood, *do you see anything* that breaks your heart?
4. *Do you see anything* you can do to heal the broken hearts?