



Christ in You: Alive & Free

Supplemental resources for discussion groups

Chapter 1: Normal

Process

Questions in this section are typically more personal questions for people to process the content in their personal life. If your group has difficulty speaking up, you could encourage them to write down their thoughts and then ask if anyone would like to share something from what they've written. There aren't right or wrong answers necessarily, but are meant to encourage deeper thinking.

In what area(s) of your life are you living independently from God?

As with Adam and Eve, we may often be tempted to judge for ourselves is good or not good for us, instead of trusting God to determine that for us. Are there areas where you have just decided that something was the best option for you, instead of considering what God thinks of it?

How difficult is it for you to acknowledge wrongdoing? What defense mechanism(s) do you employ to keep from coming clean? Blame? Deflection? Victimization? Isolation?

For some, they may be too quick to acknowledge wrongdoing because they believe there is something wrong with them so if something isn't quite right, it must be their fault. The hope, here, is that people begin to recognize their defense mechanisms (or how they've learned to cope with life).

For the areas where people have legitimately done wrong, encourage them to think about their first responses, their first thoughts, and to ask them if those line up with Scripture and the way we were intended to live...do they line up with Genesis 2 or Genesis 3?

In what areas of your life do you still struggle with the temptation to hide?

This could be challenging for people to answer, especially if this is a new group with people who don't really know each other yet. It's ok to create the space for people to think without the pressure to share.

After people have had a chance to process this questions, especially if no one wants to share, ask them if they can see how the temptation to hide leads to isolation and shame. See if they are connecting the dots between hiding and disconnects in their relationships with others.

Reflect

How does the Bible’s description of “normal” compare to the current cultural definition of normal? How does this challenge your ideas of what you’re seeking in life?

Normal is God defining/deciding what is good. He is the judge of what is good and what is not good. A joyful, fulfilled life of dependence on God was normal. It was “good.” This is who we were created to live and what “normal” really is. The way our world operates, most of our experiences, what we most likely consider to be “normal,” then, is actually abnormal and not how we were created/designed to live.

When we don’t understand that we were created to live dependently on him, when we don’t recognize that that is “normal,” then we seek to find life and experiences in other places.

How would your life look different if you aligned your thoughts of ‘normal’ with God’s description of “normal?”

We live according to what we believe. So, if we haven’t believed that normal is living dependent on God as our Source, then we will live as if normal is something else. Oftentimes, the struggle we’re experiencing is because our thoughts are in conflict with the actual truth of God. We also accept as “normal” the things that we have experienced in our life.

For example: You may believe that the way your family of origin operated was (at least somewhat) normal. Then you talk with others and listen to what they describe their family to have been like (which they think is normal) and you begin to realize that maybe your family wasn’t normal after all.