



Welcome to FAST FORWARD. If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some simple instructions, as well as the continuation of the questions, on page 2, and this week's Group Practice Suggestion on page 3.

March 21, 2021

"Just Say No"

Luke 9:1-27

WEEK 5

Questions to use with your group:

- ▶ What has God been teaching you this week, whether through your prayer and fasting, or in other ways?
- ▶ Read Luke 9:1-5 – What comes to your mind about the strange instructions Jesus gave the disciples as he sent them out?
- ▶ Pastor Bryan preached on the important rhythm of “gathering and scattering.” We see Jesus employing it here in Luke 9 and we see this dynamic at work in our lives as disciples as well. Many of us have experienced the rhythm of gathering for worship and being sent out into in mission to the world of our everyday lives.
 - ▶ What did this look like in your life before the Covid-Pandemic and what does it look like now that our lives are dramatically different? What have been the challenges in not being able to gather physically and not being sent this past year?
 - ▶ Despite the challenges of virtual life, many of us have been able to find ways to serve and be a blessing to others. What have you learned from your experiences or seen in another that has impacted you?
 - ▶ Reflecting on the thought that “We can’t separate spiritual formation from redemptive mission.” (Aaron Niequest), as the world slowly reopens and as our church community prepares to relaunch, what opportunities do you imagine there will be to serve others? How can we prepare ourselves for whatever new normal takes shape?

How to Use These Study Guides:

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- If your group is new this Lent, take some time during each meeting to get to know one another.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another, and be sure to set aside time for prayer.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question. Pick two or three that you think will be fruitful for your group, and invite people to reflect on those.
- Use the weekly Group Practice Suggestions (found on page 3) if they are helpful for your group.
- You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
- Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.

Questions, cont.

- ▶ *An often-quoted and challenging teaching appears in this section – “Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for my sake will save it.” Luke 9:23-24*
 - ▶ Meditating on this for a few quiet moments, what does it say to you? (Perhaps re-read it a couple times and soak in the words).
 - ▶ As we consider the practice of fasting, how does fasting help prepare our hearts to apply the truth contained in Jesus' words?
 - ▶ Bryan put it succinctly by saying, “Fasting is a way of saying NO to ourselves in order to say YES to others.” What opportunities are there that you can say “Yes” to? Are there any opportunities or service that we can do collectively?

This Week's Group Practice Suggestion

- ▶ As our faith community relaunches its ministry in the coming months, may we remember the rhythm of “gathering and scattering.” As we do, perhaps the Lord will make you aware of a need or a ministry to serve in. Perhaps fasting, in some form personal to you, will become a more regular practice in your life. Let us spend a few minutes together in quiet reflection on how we can keep our hearts ready to serve now and in the time to come. And then close in prayer.