

Session 3: How to Cross a Threshold

Opening:

Once everyone has gathered, set a timer for 1 minute of silence.

After 1 minute, read this verse out loud, slowly and clearly.

“Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

Happy are those who keep his decrees, who seek him with their whole heart,
who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways.” (Psalm 119:1-3)

Enjoy one more minute of silence.

Ask the group to listen to the verse again, and choose one word or phrase that resonates with them, no explanation necessary.

Read the verse again:

“Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.

Happy are those who keep his decrees, who seek him with their whole heart,
who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways.” (Psalm 119:1-3)

Invite the group members to say their word or verse (can go around in a circle).

Read this prayer:

Our hearts are pulled toward many things, O God. Toward beauty and rest and wholeness, but also, we are ashamed to say, toward ugliness in thought and speech, toward selfishness, toward pride. Forgive us, gracious God, and in your mercy draw us to you so that we may seek you with our whole hearts and walk in your ways. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Read aloud this quote from the book:

“I am not in charge of which doors will be presented to me through my life. I may not be able to force a closed door to open. I am not in charge of what’s behind the door. But I am in charge of one dynamic: when a door is open, I get to choose how I will respond. Sometimes it’s what you do after the door opens that makes all the difference.” (p.134).

Discussion:

Once you’ve made a choice (for example, about where to go to college or which job to take) do you dwell on the “what if’s”? Do you wonder what life would be like if you had made a different choice? When your choice reveals some struggle, do you beat yourself up for making “the wrong choice,” or do you see it as part of the deal?

Here’s what John Ortberg says (taken from pages 136)

“Often we fail to go through open doors in a wholehearted way because we experience what is sometimes called buyer’s remorse. People are most likely to suffer buyer’s remorse in three conditions:

- I’ve put lots of effort into the decision (it cost considerable time, money, or energy).
- The decision was my responsibility (so I can’t blame someone else).
- The decision carries high commitment (I can’t move out of this house for a long time).”

Sometimes, we make a decision and say that “we don’t have peace about it.” That means that we assume that all of our “godly” decisions will necessarily bring about inner peace.

However, as Ortberg writes,

“The sequence in the Bible is usually not

- Calling
- Deep feeling of peace about it
- Decision to obey
- Smooth Sailing

Instead it’s usually

- Calling
- Abject terror
- Decision to obey
- Big problems
- More Terror
- Second Thoughts
- Repeat several times
- Deeper faith.” (p. 138-139)

You might be asking, ‘You mean there could be an expectation that I would voluntarily suffer loss, refrain from pleasure I could otherwise have, sacrifice my comfort, reduce my lifestyle, give up my time, confess my sin, be accountable to a community, or humble my pride?’

Yep.

The way to go through one of God’s open doors is with all your heart. And ‘with all your heart’ means that sacrifice is involved—choosing one thing means not choosing another.” (p. 140)

Calvin College has a mission statement that includes the word “wholehearted.” The word was chosen to reflect the passion with which we want to live before the face of God: “Calvin College equips students to think deeply, act justly, and live *wholeheartedly* as Christ’s agents of renewal in the world.”

In what areas of your life are you living wholeheartedly?

Name an area of your life that is getting only part of your heart—and think about why that is. How could you change that?

Ortberg again:

“. . . often what matters most is not the decision I make but how I throw myself into executing it well. It’s better to go through the wrong door with your best self than the best door with your wrong self. Sometimes the way in which I go through the door matters more than which door I actually go through.” (p. 135)

How can this group (or a friend, spouse, co-worker) help you to bring your whole heart to your life, your decisions, your discipleship?

Because of this lesson, what will change in your life with God and others this week?