

## How To Live as God's Exiles

Group Discussion Guide | May 29, 2022

### Open your time together by catching up on each other's weeks (15 minutes).

Ask, "What have the highs from your past week been? What have been the lows?"

Once you've finished catching up, take a moment to still yourselves. Then, have someone pray over your time together.

### Read Scripture, go over the sermon, and share your thoughts and reflections (45 minutes).

- What challenged you from this sermon? What resonated?
- **Read 1 Peter 1:1-3.** How does Peter describe the people he is writing to? What areas of the ancient world are these people in?
- What does it mean for God's people to be "exiles?"
- In his sermon, Mike talked about how, "Living as God's exiles begins with grasping this self-understanding" of ourselves. Do you view yourself as an "exile?" Why or why not? Should you?
- In what ways is the work of each person of the Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) at work in bringing God's people into relationship with him according to these first three verses?
- How does God's saving work turn us *into* exiles in the world?
- **Read John 1:12-13; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3:1-2.** How do these passages relate to our identity being "not of this world?"
- Mike also mentioned in this message how, "This new identity comes with a new way of life." **Read 1 Peter 1:14-17.** What does Peter call the believers to in these verses? What might that call look like for you right now?
- The last point that Mike made was, "Out of the new way of life flows a witness to the community around us." How does **1 Peter 2:11-12** make this point?
- Would you say the Christian witness in our country is a net positive or a net negative? Explain.
- Would you say the Christian witness in our local community is a net positive or a net negative? Explain.
- What needs to be different in *this* life group for us to witness better to our community?

### Split into gendered accountability groups (30 minutes).

Take some time and work through the following list of questions as a group. These questions come from John Wesley, a key theologian and preacher in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?

3. Do I confidentially pass on to another what was told to me in confidence?
4. Can I be trusted?
5. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?
6. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
7. Did the Bible live in me today?
8. Do I give it time to speak to me every day?
9. Am I enjoying prayer?
10. When did I last speak to someone else about my faith?
11. Do I pray about the money I spend?
12. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
13. Do I disobey God in anything?
14. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
15. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
16. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?
17. How do I spend my spare time?
18. Am I proud?
19. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisees who despised the publican?
20. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold a resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I doing about it?
21. Do I grumble or complain constantly?
22. Is Christ real to me?

Once you have gone through this list of questions, be sure to talk about and pray through anything that you find in your heart that doesn't align with the way of Jesus. There is no judgment here, no shame. This tool is just meant as a check-in, a helpful diagnostic to how we're doing spiritually!

**Finish with intercessory prayer (10 minutes).**

Finally, like each week, finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone's prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close in prayer.