

January 20, 2019 - Home Group Notes

FOCUS FOR THIS WEEK:

We will focus on how to respond to a culture that is increasingly opposed to Jesus and us. This generalized opposition could lead us to feel fear, anxiety, anger, and much more. The question we want to address is, 'How can we, together, lean on God in the face of this opposition?' (Reminder: To be "still" before God means to lean on or sink into God.)

SHARE IT

What kinds of opposition have you or friends faced? What did you feel?

NOTES TO LEADERS: As you know, opposition comes in many forms. It can be from within your own family, work life, culture, teams, and even in your church. I am guessing that most of us have a story about facing and adversary of some kind.

LEARN FROM THE BIBLE

Read about the opposition Elisha faced in 2 Kings 6:8-23

What opposition did Elisha face from Aram? What could have caused him to fear?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Aram threatened Elisha, surrounded Elisha. The kinds of fears could have been fear of physical attack, torture, death. He could have feared for family and friends, conquer of kingdom, or even the worship of His God when His nation was crushed.

What was Elisha's response to the attack? What gave him confidence in God?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Elisha trusted in His God. Specifically, He believed God could protect him/them, defeat the enemy, and even cease the warring. (In this case, He did all three.) The difference in his response and his servants was because God had already opened his eyes. So, Elisha's response was to trust God to protect from the opposition AND open the eyes of his servant.

What gave him confidence was the character of God, the previous acts of God, and God's promises.

What things in our own culture feel like opposition to you? What do you feel? In what ways do you need Jesus to "open our eyes?" Where do you find refuge?

NOTES TO LEADERS: The list could be long: abortion, racism, immorality, violence, etc.

What do we learn about God in this story? How can we "lean into God" in times of fear or anxiety caused by our culture?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Without direct statements, this passage says much about God: He is powerful, enlightens us, personal, loving, merciful, and has a master plan to reveal Himself to all people. We learn to "lean into God" (1) by turning to him instead of our own resources, (2) by living by faith instead of our feelings, and (3) by living on mission to reach the world.

How did Elisha demonstrate Jesus' words in Matthew 5:44-45?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Like Jesus, he showed love to his enemies.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

Have there been times when you felt surrounded by the enemy? What did you feel?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Give people time to consider their experiences. We have all had these times. The point of this question is to help them reflect and share on our natural tendencies toward fear or fight or flight.

What elements of our culture cause you to feel opposition, fear, or anxiety? What are ways that we might respond to opposition?

NOTES TO LEADERS: The list could be long and drift into anxiety. Be careful here.

As we are increasingly in opposition with some elements in our culture, how can we live out Jesus' command to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44-45)? How can we 'lean on Him?'

NOTES TO LEADERS: This is the lead discussion question. We will all feel some of this opposition every time we turn on the news. I would suggest that you reread notes from the message on Sunday. The example of Martin Luther King helps us to see what Jesus command looks like.

How was Jesus an example of how to live in a culture that opposes us (and Him)?

NOTES TO LEADERS: This is the lead APPLICATION QUESTION. His example, promises, and empowerment should be how we live out a life of leaning on God and now living in fear.

So glad you are shepherding God's flock,

Steve