Overcomers Guide to the Holidays

Pastor Derek Sanford

December 2, 2018

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. What holiday related “stuff” is currently stressing you out? It’s good to acknowledge it and call it out! Have the group share (if they’re comfortable).
3. Pastor Derek reminds us that Jesus sets the example in how our prayer life should be. Read **Luke 5:15-16**, **Luke 6:12**, **Luke 9:18**, **Matthew 14:23**, and **Mark 1:35**. What are some commonalities in these passages? What specific action is Jesus modeling for us?
4. Read **Philippians 4:6-7**. What does Paul say we should pray about? If we pray that way, what is the outcome?
5. Read **Mark 11:24**. What does this scripture say about the power of prayer? How does that change the importance of prayer in your everyday life?
6. In his sermon, Pastor Derek said one way to live FULL this season is to build in time to stop and fill up. Read **Luke 11: 2-4** and **John 6:35**. How is Jesus described in these scriptures? What is something you can do to remember that Jesus is the giver of Life, not all of the other stuff that fills up our time? Why is it so easy for all the stresses of life to take over and steal our joy?

**Next Steps**: Look at the next week in your schedule/calendar, where can you add additional time to retreat and pray? Set a reminder (however works best for you!) to pray outside of your normal quiet time/devotional time.

**Prayer Thought**: Have a group member read **Psalm 16:5-11** aloud. Use that piece of scripture as a guide for the group to silently pray using the ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication/Say What You Need).

**Tis the Season:**  How will your group celebrate the Christmas season together? A party? A service project? A cookie swap? Serve for a service at Christmas at the Warner together? How can you as a leader encourage each member of your group during this busy month? Take time to talk and pray about this together. (Note: There is no leader guide for the week of Christmas, December 23-29. If your group plans to meet, perhaps use that time to reflect on all that God has done in and through your lives in 2018. Spend some time in prayer together. Leaders guides for December 30th and the January sermon series will come in the BLAST email on December 27th.)

Overcomers Guide to the Holidays: Overcoming Conflict

Pastor Derek Sanford

December 9, 2018

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. How do you tend to deal with conflict? Are you an avoider, spewer, or worrier? Give an example of how this has impacted relationships and/or holidays in the past.
3. **Read Romans 12:14-21**. List out the things that Paul encourages us to do when relating with others. Which one(s) do you struggle with the most?
4. What makes it difficult to leave revenge to the Lord? **Read Deuteronomy 32:35**. What makes the Lord the perfect avenger of wrong?
5. **Read Matthew 18:15-17**. How does this way of conflict resolution go against the world’s methods? Describe a time when you were able to apply this passage to a conflict.
6. How has knowing Jesus brought peace to your life? How can He bring peace to your enemy?

**Next Steps:** Identify areas of conflict that recur during the holidays. First, pray for those people and your time with them. Second, think through how you might respond if the conflict arises.

**Prayer Thought:** Instead of sharing prayer requests, pray “selfish prayers”. Pray for yourself and the holiday conflicts that come up. Confess your own sin, anger, resentment to the Lord. Ask the Lord to prepare you and for the Holy Spirit to use you to be a reconciler.

OVERCOMERS GUIDE TO THE HOLIDAYS: Overcoming Expectations

Pastor Derek Sanford

December 16, 2018

**Life Group Discussion Questions:**

1. Thinking back on this week’s sermon, was there a particular point or passage that challenged you, confused you, or caught your attention?
2. **Read John 12:1-7.**  Why do you think Mary anointed Jesus? Why do you think Judas was angry about it? Jesus knew their true motives and how did he react to each of them?
3. **Read 2 Corinth. 2:15,16; Galatians 1:10; Phil 4:8** People may have varying opinions about what we say and do but what really matters? Share some expectations you have for the holidays that can cause stress. How can you guard against unrealistic expectations of yourself and others?
4. **Read Philippians 4:6,7 and Colossians 3:15,16** How will an attitude of thankfulness reduce your anxiety? What are some ways you can direct your thoughts toward thanks when you begin to feel stressed?
5. **Read 1 John 5:21**  What are some ways you could be tempted to make idols out of your holiday traditions and expectations? How can you keep that from happening?
6. **Read Romans 8:1; Psalm 46:1; Philippians 4:13; Psalm 27:1; Psalm 119:105 .** How should God’s Word form our expectations for ourselves and others? Share some other favorite promises from the Bible and try reading one or two substituting your own name for the pronouns to make it more personal. Discuss how your group can use God’s promises to encourage each other.

**Next Steps**: a) Make a short list of God’s promises/truths and read it over often

b) Commit to pray for each other during this holiday seasonand ask God to show you if you have unrealistic expectations of yourself or others

**Prayer Thought:** Following the ACTS method, have your group take some time to ADORE and thank Jesus for being the true source of all expectation. Then ask them to silently CONFESS ways they have made idols of their holiday traditions or judged others. Next THANK Jesus for being born as a baby to take on our human struggles and, finally, SAY WHAT YOU NEED and ask Him to help you have expectations based only on His truth.