

Chapter Eight: Gazing Upon Christ

This week's chapter and discussion is designed to help people learn to enjoy Jesus for who He is, and to invest in being with Him and embracing Him with no strings attached! This is probably going to be a stretch for people, including you, since we're not accustomed to relating to Jesus in this way. Your leadership in setting the pace, acknowledging some awkwardness, and yet supporting the underlying teaching of this chapter will go a long way in helping people "get it".

Getting Connected

This is a pretty non-threatening ice breaker question. To build the transition to the discussion on "gazing", you might ask people if they enjoy looking at photo albums, pictures of loved ones they have on their walls, etc. Maybe even if they have a favorite picture on their walls right now they find themselves looking at a lot.

Highlights and Insights

Allow time for people to wrestle with the question, "*Which of these two words best describes your experience with Christ right now, and why?*" ... especially the "Why?" Again, your reminder that a lot of us who are busy and productivity-oriented aren't very good at gazing, will go a long way.

Biblical Focus

The relationship between "gazing", passion and priorities are important ones. Make sure those dots are connected as you discuss. In the discussion questions we've taken the passage from Acts 16 a step further than the book does in helping people think about how their "gazing" affects their demeanor and responses to the people around them. In short, "gazing" changes us at a heart level that can be observed and responded to by others.

The Heart of the Matter

Perhaps if people have had difficulty doing this as individuals, these questions can be answered by group brainstorming in terms of possibilities. Then, after you're done, invite people to say which one/s resonate the most with them.

In Conclusion...

PLEASE take time to read through this concluding exercise before group and to plan in advance to make this a positive experience for your group. What this will mean is having a CD with a couple of worship songs ready to go, and in advance asking someone to be prepared to read the prayer as recommended on page 163. While there's a flow to this time, it's important that it not become rigid or so structured that this interferes with people being still and being with Jesus. Your setting the pace for this to happen will go a long way! Thanks again for your leadership. We pray for you and know that God is using you in the life of your group.

