



No Vacancy

Part 2 - "Making Room By Clearing Our View"

Small Group Material

December 4th, 2016

Leader Guide

Bottom Line: *If you can see clearly, everything changes.*

Study Verses: *1 Peter 1:13-16, Matthew 6:22-23, Titus 2:11-14*

Define The Win: *Participants would recognize how they are using their emotions to view their circumstances. They would be able to articulate their dominant positive and negative emotion for 2016.*

Key Points

- *We are no longer trapped by our former ignorance, but freed by future grace.*
- *The moments we most want to escape are the moments we most need to engage.*
- *We like faith on our terms. But, hope requires uncertainty.*
- *When we're constantly attracted by the common, we are not available to the holy.*
- *Time is the way grace comes to us.*
- *People tend to see what they're looking for.*
- *Future grace is the recognition that God meets us in the moments as we walk by faith.*
- *Worry keeps us stuck in patterns of former ignorance.*

ENCOUNTER

- Would you say you are an optimist or pessimist? When things don't go according to plan, are you an escapist or control freak? How do your answers influence your emotions and how you view your ability to change?
- How have you experienced confirmation bias (people tend to see what they're looking for) in your life and the lives of others? How does this lens impact one's hope for change?
- What's the difference between seeing your emotions through the lens of God's purpose rather than funneling God's purpose through the lens of your emotions?

FORMATION

- Read 1 Peter 1:13-16. In this passage how does the author contrast future hope with former ignorance? What fuels our former ignorance? How does giving in to this line of thinking lead to past patterns and unchecked desires?
- Read Titus 2:11-14. What role does setting our mind on future grace play in our transformation process? What is the key to not getting stuck in old patterns?
- Read Matthew 6:22-23. What does Jesus want us to understand about our perspective and the lens we use to view life?

EXPRESSION

- What has been your most dominant emotion (pick one positive and negative) in 2016? Why have these emotions made an extended appearance in your life?
- Do you trust and believe God has a purpose for your current circumstances? What makes you answer in the way that you do? Does your answer match the way you are responding to your circumstances?
- Where are you struggling to see beyond the present moment or viewing yourself through your past patterns?
- How are you allowing your emotions be the lens you use to view your circumstances? What would it look like to clear your view?

LEADER INSIGHT: *People tend to see what they are looking for. Psychologists call this confirmation bias. It is this lens which not only drives our emotions, but also influences how we respond to the world around us. If all we see are obstacles, excuses and difficulty, we will respond accordingly and not move. When we look in the mirror and the reflection staring back at us is our old self, there is little hope for the future. When we find ourselves stuck, hope is nowhere to be found. Instead, we reason "this is how it will always be" and head back to our past patterns and unchecked desires, which only perpetuates the problem.*

Many of us are unaware of the glasses we put on. We've become so accustomed to viewing life through our emotional lens that our perceptions become our reality, whether they are true or not. Our lens shapes our self-worth. They determine our willingness to display courage and take steps of faith. It directs our responses and impacts our relationships. Our emotions are the lens through which we view life.

Yet, the bigger issue is how many of us don't pay attention to how our emotions are guiding us. Instead of seeing our emotions through the lens of God's purpose, we often funnel God's purpose for our life through the lens of our emotions. This gets us in trouble because our emotions can very easily deceive. They can send us in directions we weren't intended to go and they have the power to keep us clinging to the past.

Whether we recognize it or not, an emotion has made its home inside our heart and laid claim to our thoughts and actions. A dominant emotion has set the tone for the past year of our lives. A positive emotion and a negative emotion have woven their ways through our experiences, shaped our perspective and dictated our responses this year.

When it comes to the positive emotion, we want to identify ways that we can foster its growth. However, when it comes to the negative emotion, recognizing and acknowledging its presence isn't enough. If we do nothing about it, this emotion will be what we bring with us into the New Year. Rather than experiencing new beginnings, we will be bogged with our past. A fresh start requires us to face our emotions.