



## No Vacancy

Small Group Material

Leader Guide

## Part 1 - "Making Room By Making Time"

November 27th, 2016

**Bottom Line:** *In order to see Him, we must make room in our lives to look.*

**Study Verses:** *1 Peter 1:13-16, 1 John 3:1-3, Leviticus 11:44-45, 1 Samuel 12:16, Habakkuk 2:20 and Matthew 11:28-30*

**Define The Win:** *Participants would understand the importance of being intentional with their time. They would begin to look for ways to create margins in their schedule for solitude and reflection. Group members would utilize the end of the year to prepare their hearts and minds for 2017.*

### Key Points

- *The normal, natural pace of life does not push one towards spiritual formation.*
- *Embracing the future requires dealing with the past.*
- *Our lives are full of what we make room for.*
- *Holiness isn't about our behavior, but our purpose. Holiness means to be "set apart."*
- *Unfinished business bogs down new beginnings.*
- *Time is a carrier of grace and that's why it heals. We get grace in each moment.*

## ENCOUNTER

- Complete the following sentence: 2016 has been a year of \_\_\_\_\_ . What makes you answer in the way that you do?
- How do you tend to handle the hustle and bustle of the holiday season? How would you describe your current pace? Is it pushing you towards or away from spiritual formation?
- Holiness isn't about our behavior, but our purpose. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? How do you tend to define holiness?

## FORMATION

- Read 1 Peter 1:13-16 and Leviticus 11:44-45. How would our approach to spiritual formation change if we viewed holiness as being "set apart? How can one pursue holiness in their schedule?
- Read 1 John 3:1-3. What role does understanding our identity have in what we value and pursue?
- Read 1 Samuel 12:16, Habakkuk 2:20 and Matthew 11:28-30. Why does God command us to be still? What does God promise us if we slow down, trust Him and embrace solitude?

## EXPRESSION

- Embracing the future requires dealing with your past. What is the danger and cost to your future when you allow things to remain unfinished?
- Where are you reluctant to deal with your past? What is creating this hesitation (pride, fear, doubt, unforgiveness, worry, etc.)?
- How could you leverage the month of December to create momentum heading into 2017? What would it look like to make space in your life during the holiday season to hear God's voice?

**LEADER INSIGHT:** *Things speed up rather than slow down during the holidays. It's called the holiday rush, not the holiday lull, for a reason. In the midst of all the hustle and bustle many of us do not stop long enough to pause and reflect. We are rushing to get to the finish line of the year and, as a result, we have the potential to lose sight of all that God has done over the past year and what he wants us to understand right here and right now.*

*The normal, natural pace of life doesn't push us towards spiritual formation. But what if we set apart time in our hectic schedule to just be still? How could we leverage the month of December to create momentum heading into 2017? What would it look like to make space in our lives to hear God's voice?*

*Our calendar serves as one of the greatest revealers of our heart. In our head we can convince ourselves that certain things are a priority: family, service, relationships, faith. But, when we look at our planner, it's there in black and white. This isn't meant to make one feel guilty but rather serve as a reminder to arrange our days according to what we say we value. Use this as an opportunity to recognize that your schedule is never set in stone and you have the power to make your time count.*

*Committing to create margins in your life during the holidays takes intentionality and a willingness to let some things go. Margin is the white space in your schedule, nothing penciled in, no commitments. It's time set aside to connect with your Creator. It's where you do more listening than you do talking. Creating margins doesn't come naturally. It takes saying "no" to some things so you can say "yes" to God. Sometimes solitude is the greatest gift we can give ourselves. The time has come to prepare Him room and pursue holy lives.*

*Often, we view holiness through the lens of our behavior, yet Scripture paints a different picture. Holiness has much less to do with our actions than it does understanding our purpose. Holiness simply means to be "set apart." Understanding our identity in Christ has the ability to transform everything about us: how we deal with the past, leverage our present and have hope for our future.*

*We can pursue holiness through our schedule. Making room for something means making time to look and notice. Our lives are full of what we make room for. The only way we can possess a clear vision for the future is by effectively dealing with the past. Unfinished business bogs down new beginnings. Being present during these times is paramount because, if we don't process these feelings, we either carry these moments and the baggage that comes with them into the New Year or we miss opportunities to celebrate growth, appreciate relationships and recognize important lessons that God is trying to teach us. Often, these are the steps we want to skip, but if we do, instead of standing securely, we will be leaning on something other than God to get us through our days.*

*Tomorrow is never promised. Today is all we are given. Stop giving so much credit to your future self. It will be impossible for Future Jane and Future Jim to be those men and women who live boldly when your present self is*

*shrinking back from their present-day responsibility. What you do today shapes who you are tomorrow. Rather than procrastinate, live with purpose.*