



The Norm Series

Part 3 - "Normally Important"

Small Group Material

March 26th, 2017

Leader Guide

Bottom Line: *Instead of trying to understand Jesus through the lens of your hang ups, process your hang ups through the lens of a relationship with Christ.*

Study Verses: *Acts 15:5-19, Luke 10:38-42, 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.*

Define The Win: *Participants would be willing to share how their hang ups, doubts and struggles have inhibited their faith over the years. They would be able to articulate what serves as the essentials to the faith and the Gospel message. Group members would be able to pinpoint how their struggles have played a part in their story.*

Key Points

- *Let everything in your life find meaning and purpose within the context of your relationship Christ.*
- *What is normally important isn't always what is most important.*
- *Sometimes we take the most important issue for granted by getting hung up on all the less essential concerns.*
- *What matters is what keeps everything else afloat.*
- *Come to Him. Learn from Him. Walk with Him.*
- *Our struggles and doubts are a normal part of our faith journey.*

- *Don't make it difficult for people to turn to God and follow Jesus.*
- *The context of the relationship changes how you think about everything else. When you come to Jesus, everything changes.*
- *Your struggle is a critical part of your story.*

ENCOUNTER

- **What do you view as the most important parts of the Gospel message that without them its power would be lost?**
- **How does one know when the issues they are hung up on are merely opinions or preferences and not essentials to the faith?**
- **What are some misconceptions, opinions and preferences that inhibit people from exploring Jesus and faith further?**

FORMATION

- **Read Acts 15:5-19. What was being debated in this passage? How were some trying to overcomplicate the Christian faith? How did the apostles and elders respond to this situation?**
- **Read Luke 10:38-42. In the midst of demands of life, how had Martha lost sight of what was most important? What did Jesus want her to understand?**
- **Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-19. Why does the resurrection of Jesus serve as a fundamental issue of our faith? What happens to our faith if this claim is not true?**

EXPRESSION

- **Before coming to faith, what were your biggest hang ups and doubts about church, the Bible, Jesus and Christianity? How did you get past and overcome these hang ups? Are there any hang ups you continue to have?**
- **Over the years how have your struggles played a critical part in your own story? What have your struggles taught you about yourself as well as God?**
- **In what ways are you guilty of overcomplicating your faith? How can you begin to shed some of the weight that comes with this baggage?**

LEADER INSIGHT: *What is truly important can get lost in the shuffle. Life gets busy. People and things demand our attention. Our priorities get out of whack. As a result, we lose perspective. We spend our lives on things that may not be as important as we think until something happens and we realize what is truly important. What is normally important isn't always what is most important. Sometimes we take the most important for granted and get hung up on all the other issues.*

The same holds true to our faith. We add on requirements to walking with God. We allow our biases to cloud our judgment. We make our personal preferences the "end all, be all" in regards to what a Christian should look like. We confuse opinions for truth and preferences for law.

We attempt to understand Jesus through the lens of our hang ups. Instead, we should process our hang ups through the lens of our relationship with Christ. The context of this relationship changes how we think about everything else. When we come to Jesus, everything changes.

The shedding of religion enables us to walk securely in our relationship with God. The command is to follow Jesus: Come to Him, learn from Him and walk with Him. Everything hinges on the life of Christ. We are not merely adhering to a philosophy of life, but following a life-giving, death-conquering God. This is why we must look into the claims of Christ and the events surrounding His resurrection with an open mind. If Jesus lived and merely died, then we should give Him little concern. He would be just a footnote in history. But if He lived, died and rose again, then we must look closer at His life and the implications it should have on our lives.