



Comeback Week Four

Opening Prayer: God, we want to be open to what you are doing. Help us to be aware of what you are inviting us into this season.

Talk It Over:

This week's talk looked at the idea that God wants to use us to help others connect with him. Sometimes the goal we are working towards isn't having someone say 'yes' to Jesus, but rather helping someone else finish well and experience a comeback of their own. Regardless of their faith, their openness to Jesus, where and how we know them, and the details of the circumstance, God is inviting us to come alongside others on their journey.

- Have you ever been lost? What caused you to lose sight of where you were and where you were headed? What was that experience like? How did you find your way back to the thing or person you were looking for? Maybe this was an experience you had as a kid, maybe this was last week when you forgot where you parked your car or maybe your were driving to a new place and your GPS flipped out. This might be a lighter story, or something more serious and meaningful.

Read Mark 2:1-12 (The Voice)

- What about this story jumped out at you the most?
- Has anyone ever helped you experience a comeback, helped you finish well, or helped you experience Jesus? How did this person help you?

Often times the most helpful thing we can do is compassionately be aware of where people are in life. When we focus on being present with others we are better equipped to walk alongside others and to remind people they are not alone. Plus, when we are actually aware and present with people, we generally can point people to Jesus more effectively.

- Do you have someone in your life who listens well? Describe what it is about their presence or response that makes you know they are listening, and the sort of impact they have on you.
- Share a time you know you listened well to someone else or a time you know you listened poorly.
- Most of us have experienced a time where someone intended to be helpful, but their involvement only made things more difficult. What are some key markers to be mindful of when it comes to real help versus good intentions gone wrong?

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This week we were reminded that Jesus has the ability to always know everyone's biggest need. Along these same lines, God desires to use regular, imperfect people — like us— to help demonstrate he is present, active, cares and is aware of what we need.

- Have you ever experienced someone else helping you in such a way that made you believe, consider, feel, or think like God was present, active and caring? Share about that experience.
- Have you ever done something for someone else and helped them understand that God is present, active and caring? Did you set out knowing you were helping someone experience God's goodness or was it an unintentional, unconscious fortunate accident? Share about that experience.
- Have you ever regretted not helping someone, trying to help someone in a specific way or trying to help too much? What wisdom did you miss or ignore on the front end of that process? What did you learn from that experience?

Read Philippians 2:4 (ERV)

- How easy or natural is it for you to be open, aware and interested in the needs around you? Is there a place or time you are more inclined or less inclined to care for the needs of others?
- Do you know someone who does a good job watching out for others while not being codependent, pushy, needy, or trying to be the savior? What are some key traits they exhibit that you admire or can learn from?
- Is there a current need you see around you that you feel God is inviting you to participate in? Share about that need and how you might be able to help. But remember to listen to what God is inviting you into — the goal is not to act out of guilt, shame, or outside pressure. The goal is to listen to what God is calling and inviting us into.

Read Philippians 1:6 (ERV)

Throughout the second half of the Bible we are reminded repeatedly that God is not solely asking us to be a certain kind of person, he is actively trying to transform us to be a certain kind of people — both for our good and the good of others. We often enter into this transformation process best by experiencing God first hand, and then turning around and modeling the love, grace and goodness we experienced prior.

- How easy is it for you to remember that God is doing a good work in you and that you don't need to force or will yourself to change?
- Are there areas of life where you need to engage more in the work God is doing in order to move forward?
- Is there a current need you personally have that you want to involve God or others in more?

Closing Prayer: God, we want to experience you first hand and help others experience you first hand, as well. Help us to be transformed by you and to be a good representation of you. Please help us be aware of what you are doing, and how we can help show your love to others.