

“Don’t Settle for the Trees”

Winter Circle Groups | Week #1

MESSAGE SUMMARY

When the trials of life come, we oftentimes want to throw in the towel, give up and convince ourselves that “This is as good as it gets.” But what if these challenges were meant to strengthen our faith, rather than challenge it? Having this perspective would give us a new outlook on life’s ups and downs! This week, we will challenge our response to hardship by looking at the healing Jesus performed for the blind man. Let’s get ready to change our perspective, push past the hurt and see beyond the trees!

KEY SCRIPTURES

John 10:10-11 | Mark 8:22-25

Additional Scriptures: Rom. 15:13, James 1:4, 2 Peter 1:5-10, Joshua 6, Psalm 138:8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- If you are part of this group, most likely, you had to sacrifice something to be here and had a reason for doing so. Whether you desire more meaningful connections, accountability or even spiritual encouragement, we all want a return on our investment of time. The same is true of our heavenly Father. In response to His sacrifice, Jesus desires for us to live a full life. **What does a full life look like to the world’s standards? Read John 10:10-11 & Rom. 15:13. How do God’s standards differ?**
- In Christ, we are meant to live a full life, but this promise is contrasted with the stark reality of physical suffering. As the scripture says, “The enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy.” When the cares of life come, we must make a choice: embrace the pain or activate our faith. **Read Mark 8:22-25. Why do you think this man was blind? Was it a result of something he did? Why do you think Jesus led him out of the town to perform the miracle?**
- The first step to changing our view on hardship is to see it for what it is: an opportunity for Christ to show His power. The man’s blindness opened the door for a miracle to be done. His environment was key! Take a second look at the story and read the following verses: **James 1:4 & 2 Peter 1:5-10. How do these verses challenge you? How has your faith been tested in the areas of perseverance and faithfulness?**
- The full life promised in John 10:10 is not achieved through perfect sight. It is obtained with consistency and forward progress in our faith. We cannot settle for blurry faith and less than God’s best for us. Settling in our comfort zones stagnates spiritual development and dishonors Christ’s sacrifice! **Do you find yourself**

settling for “blurry faith” in some area of life? What comfort zones are you settling for instead of growing in this area?

As a group, we are here to support you on your journey, not judge. How might we act as a support to you as you continue to grow?

CONCLUSION & CHALLENGE

The testing of our faith is the “proving ground” of our faith - an opportunity for us to mature as disciples of Christ. While difficult to endure, the “blurry areas” of our faith are the place where the best miracles occur. Instead of feeling condemned about “Blurry” faith, what if we tell Jesus what we truly see so that He can finish what He has already begun in our lives? Imagine what MORE the Lord has in store for us if we would simply be honest with Him about the areas we have been struggling in! **When you find yourself facing an obstacle, don't avoid it, stay faithful and count it all joy! This is the perfect environment for your faith to be strengthened and for God to get the glory in your life!**

- **Challenge #1:** Proper perspective is essential if we are to get through the tests of life. Meditate on these scriptures and ask the Lord to change your perspective: **Read the story of Joshua (Joshua 6). Take note of their obedience, perseverance, and the result. Let their actions inspire you.**
- **Challenge #2:** Instead of complaining about a challenge you currently face, pray about it. Be honest with the Lord about what you don't see and ask for His perspective. (Psalm 138:8)
- **Songs of Encouragement:**
 - [Never Be Defeated](#) (Rich Tolbert Jr.)
 - [See a Victory](#) (Elevation Worship)
 - [Do It Again](#) (Elevation Worship Collective)
 - [While I'm Waiting](#) (Travis Greene)

Reminders:

- **Midday Connect:** Join us weekly for a Facebook Live conversation with the Relentless Team. We go live Wednesdays between 12 and 1 pm EST in the Relentless Circle group. We want to connect with you!
- **Thrive Classes are Here** – We all need support from time to time! Whether you are married, divorced, single or grieving, we offer Thrive Classes to give you the tools you need. Classes begin next month. Visit the [Events tab](#) for registration details!

Upcoming Events:

- **Heart's & Strength** (Men/Women) – This Friday, Jan. 31st at 7 pm (Main Sanctuary)
- **Baptism is Feb. 5th (Pursuit Night)**– The next Baptism is during Pursuit night. Visit ourrelentlesschurch.com/events to register!
- **Pursuit Night** – Wednesday, Feb. 5th at 7 pm (Main Sanctuary)
- **Community Health Fair** – Saturday, Feb. 8th (Refuel Room)