

Have you ever been on a vacation and said, "I wish I could stay here forever"? Probably most of us have had one of those moments before. One of the things that helps make a vacation relaxing is being able to disconnect yourself from your daily life back home. That is why staying there would actually end up ruining that vacation spot: it would become part of your normal life and you wouldn't be able to disconnect anymore. Interestingly, when it comes to serving God it is almost the reverse. We are afraid to follow him if it means disconnecting ourselves from our comfortable routines. The very reason we love vacation (getting away from it all) becomes the reason we stop short of completely obeying God. Just like a vacation, though, we can't stay where we are. We have to move forward because God is calling us into a new reality. Where you are now might be great but God is not done with you yet. Maybe you find yourself in a bad place and the thought of leaving "here" gives you hope. Take a moment and ask God to speak to you this week as we talk about why we can't stay here.

SESSION 3: **WHY CAN'T WE STAY HERE?**

SMALL TALK

During each session, we will begin with a question or brief activity designed to get everyone on the same page for the session.

1 Have you ever had a moment – maybe regarding a job, or a place you lived, etc. – when you realized that you couldn't stay where you were? If you are willing to share, tell the group about it.

2 One of the things we will hear about this week is that God's plans for us are bigger than our own. Go around the group and have everyone share: When you were little, what were your big plans for your life when you grew up?

TEACHING

During each session in **NEXT**, we will be watching a teaching from Pastor Greg Surratt as he walks us through Luke 5:1-11. As we read this passage we know that Peter's life is about to change. We know what God has in store for him and that is why we know that his time as a fisherman has an expiration date – he could not stay there. Have you considered that the same is true of your life? God has a plan for you; you cannot stay where you are. With that in mind, let's begin Greg's teaching for this session:

SHOW DVD SESSION 3

REFLECT

In the questions that follow, your group will spend some time reflecting on the teaching you just experienced.

1 Now that you've watched Pastor Greg's teaching, take some time to reflect in your group. Is there anyone who thinks they may be currently experiencing the call from God to leave "here" for "there?"

2 Jesus literally got into Peter's boat, but what about us? Spend some time in your group discussing what it might look like in our lives when Jesus "gets in our boat."

3 God's plans for us are always bigger than our own plans for us. Have you ever known someone who had more confidence in you than you had in yourself? How did that person or those people impact your life?

4 God's kingdom is always on the move because God is always at work doing new things and making sure that all his plans come to pass. But the fact that his kingdom is moving means that we need to make sure that we are paying attention to what God is asking us to do – the kingdom is not going to wait for us! How can you see the kingdom moving in your life? Where is God drawing your attention?

RESPOND

Now that we have spent some time reflecting on what God is saying to us, we want to consider some possible next steps.

1 Spend some time in your group discussing these two questions: What is keeping you from stepping out in faith? What is keeping you “here”? Consider these questions throughout the coming week as well.

2 Where in your life do you need to dream bigger? What is keeping you from dreaming?

3 How can your group keep each other accountable for what you’ve learned this week? How can you encourage one another to chase after God this week?

4 Allow everyone to answer this question: “How can we pray for you this week?” Be sure to write prayer requests on your Prayer and Praise Report on page ???.

Close the session in prayer.

GOING DEEPER

You can explore the following Bible passage as a group (if there is time) or on your own between sessions.

Read Acts 9:1-19. Before he became a missionary and church planter, Paul hunted down Christians. He knew exactly what he wanted to do with his life and he was convinced that he was serving God. God had other plans for Paul and in this week's Going Deeper we will be looking at the moment God confronts Paul and tells him that he can't stay where he is.

1 What stands out to you in this passage? Where is God drawing your attention?

2 Most of us will not have a dramatic encounter with God like Paul did. Most of us will have small moments when we feel God prodding us. How has God prodded you in the past? How often do you spend time listening to the voice of God?

3 God used Ananias to encourage Paul during his transition. Who does God want you to encourage in a similar way this week?

DAILY REFLECTIONS

These are daily reviews of some key Bible verses that will help you think about and apply the insights from this session. The questions are meant to help you reflect on truths related to each week's topic.

Day 1 – John 4:39-41

Jesus's Arrival Changes Everything

Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I ever did!" When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. (NLT)

When Jesus shows up, we change. How is the presence of Jesus changing you today?

Day 2 – Isaiah 6:8

Who Will Go?

Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?" I said, "Here I am. Send me." (NLT)

Are you willing to respond to God's call?

Day 3 – Matthew 3:2

The Kingdom is Near

"Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near." (NLT)

Sometimes following Christ can be difficult. Are you willing to follow in his example of suffering?

Day 4 – Luke 10:9

Heal and Tell

Heal the sick, and tell them, 'The Kingdom of God is near you now.' (NLT)

It is not enough to serve the people around us; we must tell them about the kingdom of God.

Day 5 – 1 Kings 19:15a

Go Back

Then the LORD told him, "Go back the same way you came, and travel to the wilderness of Damascus. (NLT)

God told Elijah that he couldn't stay where he was. Where is God asking you to go for him today?

MEMORY VERSE

“Master,” Simon replied, “we worked hard all last night and didn’t catch a thing. But if you say so, I’ll let the nets down again.” And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking. —Luke 5:5-7 [NLT]