

WC ENCOUNTER GROUPS CURRICULUM
LONG WALKS & SHORT PIERS
WEEK THREE



Week Three: Numbness & Disengagement

OPENING PRAYER:

Dear Loving God, open our hearts, ears, and minds so that we love the way you love and move us to action in our homes, in the church, and in the world. Use us to build your kingdom for your glory. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ENCOUNTERING GOD:

**How have you seen God at work in your life this week?
What good have you done for others?**

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WEEKLY SCRIPTURE READING:

2 Kings 20:16-19

“Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, ‘Hear the word of the Lord: Days are coming when all that is in your house, and that which your ancestors have stored up until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left, says the Lord. Some of your own sons who are born to you shall be taken away; they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’ Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, ‘The word of the Lord that you have spoken is good.’ For he thought, ‘Why not, if there will be peace and security in my days?’”

REFLECTION:

After the birth of our son, RJ, my wife started looking for disposable diapers for sensitive skin. We were wanting to use these as backups for our preferred cloth diapers. We started using Seventh Generation diapers and baby wipes, after my wife Gabbie found favorable reviews online. Our goal was to purchase a product that lessened our baby’s chances of getting a rash. Their corporate goal was to make products that helped make a more sustainable world.

Later, I found out that Seventh Generation branded itself based on an ancient Iroquois philosophy.

“The Seventh Generation Principle is based on an ancient Iroquois philosophy that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future. The first recorded concepts of the Seventh Generation Principle date back to the writing of The Great Law of Iroquois Confederacy, although the actual date is undetermined, the range of conjectures place its writing anywhere from 1142 to 1500 AD.” (<https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/seventh-generation-principle>)

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Encounter Context: 2 Kings 18-20

King Hezekiah reigned for 29 years and did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He rebelled against the King of Assyria and would not serve him. King Hezekiah became very ill. Isaiah informed King Hezekiah that he was going to die, but the King fervently prayed to God. God granted Hezekiah 15 more years. During this period, Judah flourished economically and was at peace. The health of the King was somehow bound to the wellbeing of the kingdom. When the Babylonians heard about the King's illness, they sent messengers who brought a gift and letters. King Hezekiah showed them all the resources of his palace and kingdom. This was a tragic mistake.

Encounter the Text:

In our text today, Isaiah makes Hezekiah aware of the costs of showing his enemies his treasures. Hezekiah's public response is that of a pious king ready to accept God's judgment, "The word of the Lord you have spoken is good." However, his private thoughts demonstrated numbness and disengagement, "Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?" Hezekiah's days were numbered, and he was interested in enjoying those days. Therefore, the future was of little concern to him. After all, it would be the next King's problem to solve. Hezekiah was a great king who loved the Lord. We are good people who love the Lord. I wonder if we, too, can become so self-absorbed, numb, and disengaged that we fail to consider how our actions might impact future generations. Rather than just asking the question: What can I get out of this life? What if we asked how we can leave the world better than the way we inherited it? Making a better world is not just ecological or economical; it's primarily spiritual. In fact, a heart that is turned to Jesus Christ and shares the good news through words and actions is the first step. A heart turned to Jesus is set ablaze with love of God and neighbor. This moves us from numbness and disengagement to compassion and engagement. The result is that we aren't just people waiting to die before we catch our ride to heaven or people who live to satisfy our own desires. We become active participants in preparing our world for Jesus' second coming - which leads to the transformation of the world.

GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Encounter the Head:

What is spiritual numbness and disengagement?

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How do we sometimes fall into the trap of numbness and/or disengagement?

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What was the most impactful thing that you learned from the scripture, podcast, sermon or sermon discussion guide?

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Encounter the Heart:

Share a time when you felt numb or disengaged? Where you able to overcome it? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God? What did you learn about others?

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What are some practices that we can use in our lives to help us become more passionate about the mission of Jesus Christ and more engaged in that mission?

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GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What would the world look like if we always considered how our actions might affect the Seventh Generation? What would the church look like? What would our family look like?

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Encounter the Hands:

Share prayer concerns with the group.

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PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Encounter The Hands:

Please go around the group and have each person share a praise for this week and a prayer request/

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CLOSING PRAYER

Have a volunteer lead closing prayer: asking for prayer concerns and lifting up the needs of the group.

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DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

We encourage everyone to do a daily reflection. This can be done alone, as a couple, or with your family. This spiritual practice will help answer the questions you have and it will improve your ability to see where God is at work in your life, and in the lives of those around you. Please answer the following questions during your personal devotional time at the end of the day.

Where have you seen God today? For the children, we say, “what made you happy today?”

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What broke your heart or made you sad today?

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What good thing did you do for someone else today?

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What are you thankful for today?

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