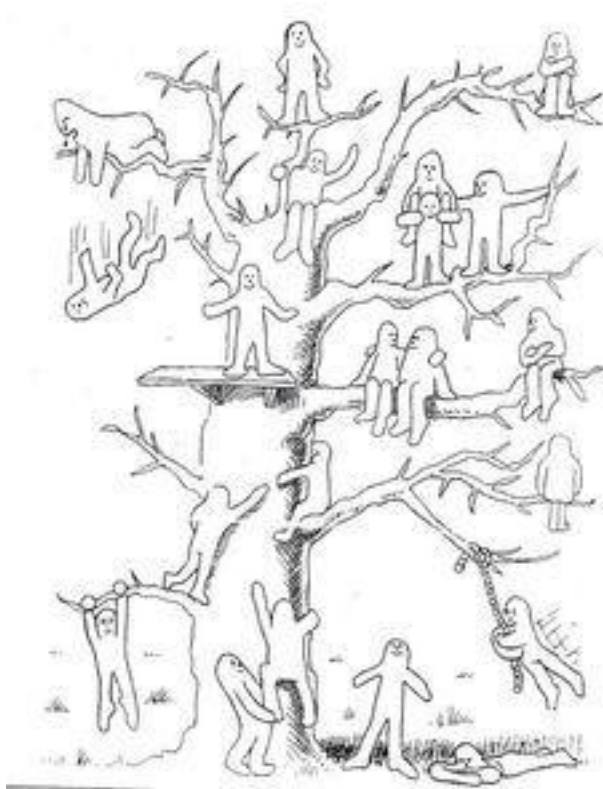


A WAY TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

This is the final week of summer. Which of these people represents how you feel about your summer? (Don't try to clarify (such as vacation), let them share what they want to share. Pick when you might share. (You should be selective about what you want to share. Some people may have had a terrible or difficult or disappointing summer. If you are one of them, you might model being vulnerable.)



HOW CAN WE PRAY?

Share requests. Follow in time of prayer. Remember to pray for . . .

- Each other – needs, ministry / mission (B.L.E.S.S. practices, disciple making)
- People in need
- Your global partners

SHARE: As you probably noticed, there are two parts to these notes, **“Your time”** and **“Group time.”** The first is an opportunity for you to learn from God’s Word as you read, listen, and learn. The second part is for when you meet for a time to share and encourage each other.

How was “Your Time” this week? Either in the reading or the questions?

GROUP TIME: DISCUSSION OF APPLICATION FROM GOD’S WORD

OPTIONAL: Before we begin the our “Group Time,” we might want to review our new “**Small Group Guidelines.**” (Read through at least the titles or the entire text.)

OPENING PRAYER: Ask someone ahead to open in prayer for the time together and for anyone who might have shared a prayer need earlier in the time together.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PASSAGE: Pastor Bill said that this chapter is considered by many as the Mt. Everest of the Bible. Others have said that this is one of the greatest, most

LET’S READ IT OUT LOUD BY READING IT AROUND THE CIRCLE ONE VERSE AT A TIME.

Read Romans 8:18-39 together.

FACILITATOR:

ASK: What are your first impressions? What words or ideas or statements stand out to you? What did you feel?

FOLLOW-UP: Did anyone else notice or feel something similar? A lot is said, and sometimes we notice different parts.

HEADS UP: One of the purposes of our time together is to encourage one another. At the end of our time together, I will ask if you would like to share something from your time in God’s Word or our time together.

READ FROM HG NOTES: Some of the words found in this passage speak to things that we might all feel at times: sufferings, bondage, pains, groaning, condemned, fear of death, and distress. Which of these (or other’s listed in the passage) have you felt? When? Why?

ASK: As you see, this chapter is freighted with promises. How does God want these promises to affect our present lives? What would that look like?

ASK: What kinds of things cause you to sometimes lose confidence about your life, your future, or your peace in suffering?

REFLECT: Let’s take a few minutes to **reread** the specific things that God promises. Hunt for one specific promise that raise up hope in you? What helps you walk through your days with confidence and peace?

SHARE: Think of those who are without Christ as Savior. What hope would they have? What might they think about their future or how to understand suffering in this life?

ASK IF SOMEONE COULD READ 1 PETER 3:15.

(3:15 reads, “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you **to give the reason for the hope that you have.**”

ASK: Peter was writing to people who were experiencing distress, trouble, and suffering.

What does this tell us about our role in the lives of people who are without the hope of being in Christ? What might 1 Peter 3:15 look like lived out in our lives?

READ TOGETHER (IN THE HG NOTES) : Let’s read together God’s final word about our future in 8:38-39:

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

MEDITATION (optional): Let’s take **one minute** to just meditate on God’s ultimate promise.

FEEL LIKE SHARING? One of the purposes of our time together is to encourage one another. Can you share one specific thing that you could share with us from our time in God’s Word together?

Feel like singing? How about “Living Hope” by Phil Wickham

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-1fwZtKJSM&list=RDu-1fwZtKJSM&start_radio=1

Or, “Yet not I” by CityAlight.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zundjUFazfg&list=RDzundjUFazfg&start_radio=1