

Community Group Guide

UNDENIABLE FASCINATION (Undeniable Series – Week 4)

The Gathering

Paul Jenkins

October 30, 2011

Various Scriptures

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Sermon Outline

UNDENIABLE FASCINATION

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1. God is undeniably fascinated with us
 - a. Often we don't realize how taken God is with us
 - b. Zephaniah 3:17
 - i. He will "rejoice" over you
 - ii. lit. means to leap for joy
 - c. We feel awkward accepting His view of us, but God is 100% fascinated with you and me
 - d. Perhaps it would be good to understand this scripturally
 - e. Song of Songs 2:14-15
 - i. Here the man speaks to the woman he loves
 - ii. It is God speaking to His bride - to you
 1. He doesn't want you hidden from Him
 2. He wants to see your face and hear your voice (v. 14)
 3. His description is intimate
 - a. Sweet voice

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- b. Lovely face
 - c. This is the language of fascination and awe
 - 4. He doesn't want anything to come between you and Him (v. 15)
 - a. Anyone in a relationship knows its all about the details
 - b. Big gestures of love mean nothing without the follow-through of daily attention
 - c. Fascination is about making sure the little things don't mess with the relationship
 - f. Bottom line? God is committed to fascination with you. It's undeniable.
2. We are to be undeniably fascinated with Jesus
- a. Psalm 33:8
 - i. The Hebrew word is "guwr" (gür)
 - ii. Literal meaning is "to sojourn, to abide, to dwell in, remain, inhabit"
 - iii. What this means, on a practical level, is that God isn't interested in one-night stands
 - iv. He wants permanency with you
 - b. In Matthew 17:4, Peter wasn't really that far off
 - c. He was so fascinated with the revealed presence of God that he wanted to remain in that place; he wanted to dwell
 - d. Peter's mistake was a fascination limited to a specific place or event
 - e. God's desire is that our relationship with Him be one of fascination always and everywhere
 - i. John 15:4
 - ii. "Abide" - word is "meno" which is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word "guwr"
3. Fascination can transcend every situation
- a. To transcend is to rise above something, to outstrip or outdo in some attribute
 - b. It is what Paul speaks about in Romans 12:21 and Colossians 3:2
 - c. Paul knew what he was talking about from (Acts 16:22f)
 - d. Our fascination with Jesus places us above our situation
 - e. This is a good step, but it's only the first of 2, and if it's all we do, we'll be "heavenly minded and no earthly good"
4. Fascination can also transform every situation
- a. This second key is the one that opens the door for God's glory
 - b. This is when the situation we've hoped to rise above no longer require us to
 - c. At this point, our fascination with Jesus brings Him into our situation
 - d. This is what Hebrews 12:2 is talking about when it says we are to fix our eyes on Jesus
 - e. Not because He is a goal far off, like when I fix my eyes on a mailbox or tree near the finish line of a race
 - f. Because He is moving nearer to us, bringing light to our situations
 - g. ILL: Wendy coming down the aisle at our wedding
 - h. Just as her presence and beauty changed the atmosphere of the room, so His presence changes everything.

Message Summary

As Christians, we are called to live lives marked by fascination. For many, realizing that the God of all creation is fascinated with us comes as quite a shock, since most of us struggle with feeling worthy of that kind of

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affection. But His fascination with us is based on His desire to have a relationship with us, and not on how good or bad we may think we are.

When we accept His fascination with us, it should naturally lead us to a lifestyle of fascination with Him. This is so much more than a one-night stand, or a temporary fix in a service. Our fascination with Jesus is much more permanent than that, and when it is, we will find our situations changed by our lifestyle of worship.

A lifestyle of worship, or fascination, with Jesus can help us rise above the situations we find ourselves in. While this is good, it isn't the best. Fascination with Jesus is ultimately intended to bring Him into our situations, and when He comes, His presence changes everything.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- How do you respond to the idea of God “dancing” over you with joy? (Zephaniah 3:17)
- If our relationship with Jesus hinges on our fascination with Him, how important is it that we watch out for the little things (Song of Songs 2:15 calls them “little foxes”) that can get in the way?
- What are the little foxes that steal your fascination from Jesus?
- Why do you think it's so hard to keep our fascination with Jesus daily?
- Pastor Paul mentioned that God isn't interested in one-night stands. How does that analogy impact you?
- If you had seen Jesus in all His glory (Matthew 17:4), how would you have responded?
- Fascination with Jesus can transcend and transform every situation. Which of the 2 is easier?
- Which of the 2 is the most common among believers? In our church?
- The closing statement was “His presence changes everything.” Describe a situation in which you saw this truth lived out.

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.

Weekly Prayer Focus . . . (from the worship guide)

- **Lives and Church:** *Pray for the families in our church to be strengthened and protected from the attack of the enemy who wants to destroy our testimony before the lost in our county.*

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- **Local:** *Pray for the ministry of the Pregnancy Resource Center, and specifically for abortion-minded women and men to seek the services they offer. This week we are also praying for North Albemarle Baptist Church and its Senior Pastor, Brad Lynch.*
- **Global:** *Pray for the Carmel Community Church in Delhi, India, which is pastored by Koshey Baby. Pray for the Lord to provide the finances necessary for the 3,000 children the church educates and feeds daily.*