



The New Normal

02.22.15

John 13:1-11

study questions

Use these questions in your community group time to dig deeper and discover how you can apply today's message to everyday life.



INTRODUCTION

Things were tense. There was an ominous lilt in the air. Something bad seemed to be about to happen, but 'what' was utterly unclear. This was the atmosphere in the upper room for Jesus' first disciples on the night before his trial. There really didn't seem to be any good options.

What do we do when our circumstances are so challenging that there's no way forward and no way out? We have problems for which there seem to be no solutions. We have questions without answers. During times like these, we're tempted to run or give up. We're tempted to give in to jealousy, resentment, and anger . . . especially anger toward God. That's because when life gets hard, it feels like God is absent, apathetic, or angry. But what if he isn't? Is it possible to hang on to joy, hope, and patience *in the meantime*?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Talk about a season of life—childhood, your teen years, college, early adulthood—that you look back on fondly. What did you enjoy about that season?
2. Have you ever seen someone demonstrate great faith in God despite difficult circumstances? If so, how did that person's faith influence your own?
3. When have you faced a difficult event or season in life that caused you to feel you'd never be happy again, or that no good could come from what you were experiencing? What happened?
4. **Read John 13:1-11 together.** What's the mood in the room? Does it sound familiar?
 - a. What do you hear in John's description of what was going on in Judas at the time?
 - b. What was Jesus trying to demonstrate in the foot washing conversation with Peter?
 - c. What does verse 1 tell you about Jesus? What does that do for you now, in this moment?
5. During the message, Dwain asserted that God loves you regardless of whether it *feels* like he loves you. How would your life be different if you lived as though you fully believed that truth?
6. If you're currently in the middle of difficult circumstances, or when you are in the future, what are some practical things you can do to remind yourself that God hasn't abandoned you? What role can a Community Group play in shoring up your faith when God is silent?

MOVING FORWARD

Sometimes God is silent. Just because he's silent doesn't mean he's absent, unconcerned, or angry. You may need to know that someday. You may need to know it *today*. During challenging times, it's easy to assume that you'll never be happy again, that no good can come from your circumstances, or that there's no use continuing. Hold on to joy, hope, and purpose by holding on to the truth that God still has the whole world—*your* world—in his hands.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me." Matthew 11:6