

CALM AND QUIET

WEEK 3

Instead I have calmed and quieted my soul.

THEME: This week we look at the first half of verse 2, “Instead I have calmed and quieted my soul.” In the midst of the chaos of life, we are given a choice. We can allow the chaos to control our lives and wreak havoc on our soul, or we can invite Jesus to calm our heart and quiet our soul.

WATCH VIDEO: *Calm. Quiet. Hope. Trust. Episode 3: Instead*
Watch this week’s video before the small group gathering.

CONSIDER:

- Have you ever experienced a Holy Spirit moment where a passage of Scripture is given new life?
- Does the concept of “instead” resonate with you? If so, how?
- How does Jesus’ work in our life bring us to calm, quiet, hope, and trust?
- What are the choices that you are facing in life, and which is God’s preferred option?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

WEEK THREE

ICEBREAKER: Each week the discussion begins with a question that allows the group to share from their own personal experiences.

Icebreaker Question: Where do you like to go to find calm and quiet? (either past or present)

PRAYER: Psalm 131

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty.
I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me.
Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul
like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child.
Israel, Put your hope in the Lord, both now and forever. Amen.

QUOTE: Charles Spurgeon

Psalm 131 “is one of the shortest Psalms to read, but one of the longest to learn. It speaks of a young child, but it contains the experience of a man in Christ. Lowliness and humility are here seen in connection with a sanctified heart, a will subdued to the mind of God, and a hope looking to the Lord alone. Happy is the man who can, without falsehood, use these words as his own; for he wears about him the likeness of his Lord, who said, “I am meek and lowly in heart.”²³

²³ Spurgeon, Charles

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL REVIEW: Take time to process together the group's experiences in last week's devotional.

- How has your pilgrimage through Psalm 131 been going? What have been some highs and lows?
- How did you find the Centering Prayer practice?
- What insights did you gain this week on calm and quiet?
- How did the other passages enhance your understanding of Psalm 131?
- Does anyone want to share their artistic expression and how it helped you connect to God or the Psalms?

DEFINITION: Instead

- A preferred alternative or a replacement in place of something else.
- Suggests that of the choices available, one is favored.
- Asks us to choose the preferred over the popular.

VIDEO DISCUSSION: Discuss themes found in this week's video.

- The video focuses on the concept of Instead. What does instead mean and imply?
- Why does God provide us with options, if he wants us to make a preferred choice?
- How does Jesus work in our life to bring us out of chaos and into calm, quiet, hope, and trust?

POPULAR vs. PREFERRED

In Psalm 131 we see that the popular choice might be pride and arrogance, but the preferred is to calm and quiet.

Discuss

- Why is pride and an arrogant heart the popular option?
- Why is a calm and quiet soul preferred?
- Which do you tend to lean toward?

QUOTE: David Guzik

Instead of proud pursuits, [the Psalmist] is determined to find satisfaction and serenity of soul, content with God and His works.²⁴

EXPLORING ROMANS 12

"Instead" shows up throughout the scriptures when we talk about giving up our pride. God continues to remind us that pride and arrogance are not the preferred choice for relating to God, others, and self.

²⁴ *The Enduring Word Bible Commentary by David Guzik*

READ: Romans 12:16

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

READ: Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Discuss:

- What does it mean to conform to the world?
- How does worldly conformity relate to pride and arrogance?
- What does it mean to be transformed?
- How does spiritual transformation lead to calming and quieting your soul?

MASH-UP SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:2, 16 & Psalm 131: 2

Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble.

Do not conform; instead, be transformed

Do not be proud and arrogant; instead, calm and quiet your soul.

Do not be wise in your own estimation; instead, live in harmony with one another.

Renew your mind. Calm your heart. Quiet your soul.

A CALM AND QUIET SOUL

READ: Psalm 131:2a "I have calmed and quieted my soul"

CONSIDER: What is a calm and quiet soul and how does one acquire it?

QUOTE: Charles Spurgeon

"It is no easy thing to quiet yourself: sooner may a man calm the sea, or rule the wind, or tame a tiger, than quiet himself. We are **clamorous, uneasy, petulant**; and nothing but grace can make us quiet under **afflictions, irritations, and disappointments.**"²⁵

Discuss:

- What do you do to calm and quiet yourself?
- How effective are your efforts?
- What keeps you from fully reaching a state of calm and quiet?

PONDER: Spurgeon's words embody our struggles. We are clamorous, uneasy, petulant people under afflictions, irritations, and disappointments. There are so many things that keep us from quiet. There are internal (clamorous, uneasy, petulant) and external (afflictions, irritations, and disappointments.)

²⁵ Surgeon, Charles

QUOTE: Charles Spurgeon

“It is no easy thing to quiet yourself: sooner may a man calm the sea, or rule the wind, or tame a tiger, than quiet himself. We are clamorous, uneasy, petulant; and nothing but grace can make us quiet under afflictions, irritations, and disappointments.”²⁶

Discuss:

- Why is it difficult to calm yourself during chaotic situations?
- Have you ever felt “clamorous, uneasy, petulant” during difficult times?
- How can God’s grace help us quiet our souls during afflictions, irritations, and disappointments?

PONDER: Jesus was the only person to calm the sea and rule the wind, and he provides the ultimate example of living our calm, quiet, hope, and trust even during the most chaotic times.

READ MARK 4:35-41

35 On that day, when evening had come, he told them, “Let’s cross over to the other side of the sea.” 36 So they left the crowd and took him along since he was in the boat. And other boats were with him. 37 A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38 He was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion. So they woke him up and said to him, “Teacher! Don’t you care that we’re going to die?” 39 He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Silence! Be still!” The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Then he said to them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” 41 And they were terrified and asked one another, “Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!”

Discuss:

- Why were the disciples feeling distraught? Did they have a right to feel that way?
- What does it say about Jesus that he could sleep in the midst of the storm?
- What do you think the disciples expect Jesus to do when they wake him up?
- Why is Jesus able to remain calm while the disciples are panicking?
- How does faith shape response?
- Why do the disciples ask, “Who then is this?”
- How can our answer to this question lead to calm, quiet, hope, and trust?

READ: Psalm 131:1-2a

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty.
I do not get involved with things too great or too wondrous for me.
Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul

PREPARE: This week, during the times of chaos, do not place your hope in your own skills and abilities, place your hope in Jesus and experience calm, quiet, hope and trust.

²⁶ Spurgeon, Charles

THE WEEK AHEAD

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL: This week we will look at how Jesus continues to remain calm in the midst of chaos by examining the three stories above and connecting them with what we are learning in Psalm 131.

- Mark 4:35-41, Jesus calms the storm
- Matthew 14:22-33, Jesus and Peter walk on the water
- Mark 9:14-27, Jesus heals a man's demon possessed son

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: For your time of spiritual practice, you are invited to experience Ignatian Contemplation, or imaginative prayer. In this prayer practice, you place yourself inside a passage from the Bible. You imagine the sights and sounds, you interact with the people, and you ask questions of those present in the story. For this exercise you will need to set aside around 45 minutes in order to properly engage in the story. Use one of the three stories listed above where Jesus speaks calm into a chaotic situation.

ARTISTIC EXPRESSION: After completing the Ignatian Contemplation, consider expressing your encounter with Jesus through an artistic medium: drawing, painting, poetry, composing. As you create, offer your expression to God. Return to it often for inspiration or additional expression.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, my heart is not proud;
my eyes are not haughty.
I do not get involved with things too great
or too wondrous for me.
Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul
like a weaned child with its mother;
my soul is like a weaned child.
Israel, put your hope in the Lord,
both now and forever.
AMEN!