



DISCUSSION GUIDE

August 2/5, 2018

Wherever You Are Going

BIG IDEA: Wherever you are going is better than where you've been.

GROUPS VISION

We believe life transformation happens when we engage with other people, with Jesus as our focus, and take next steps together. A next step is where we Ask, Listen, and Respond to take any action that advances our journey with Jesus.

KEY VERSE

By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.
Exodus 13:21-22

POTENTIAL NEXT STEP

Take a next step and read *Follow the Cloud*. Perhaps you've read it before and need to be reminded or maybe you've not read it; take time to read it and absorb the truth of living a lifestyle of next steps.

MAIN POINTS & SCRIPTURES

Valley Creek is a movement of Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled, life-giving people. We live a life of restful movement; we rest in Jesus and yet we never stop moving forward with Him. Where God is leading us is better than where we've been, and we follow His leading one next step at a time. **(1 Corinthians 2:9)** We follow the cloud; we hear God's voice and follow Him, by faith, into a life of freedom. **(Exodus 13:21-22)** The Old Testament cloud is a physical picture of a spiritual truth. Today, the cloud of God's presence doesn't just surround us but is within us. **(Galatians 5:25)**

Here's three thoughts on what it looks like to follow the cloud:

- 1. God leads us in small steps, not giant leaps.** By taking a series of small steps, we learn that His faithfulness yesterday provides the faith we need for today. God talks to us in sentences, not paragraphs, because we can only handle one small step at a time. God is the lamp that shines on our next step and the light that points in the direction we are headed. **(Psalm 119:105)** Jesus promises the Holy Spirit will show us what we need to know, at the appropriate time. **(John 16:12-13)** In the kingdom of God we obey and then we understand, even if we're unsure of where we're going. His plans are always better than ours. **(Proverbs 16:9)** We place our focus and trust on Jesus not the step we're taking. **(Hebrews 12:1-2)**
- 2. Each next step is designed to help us discover who we are, who God is and what we're created to do.** A journey of next steps isn't about where we are going, it's about who we're becoming. Taking next steps is the process, the outcome is freedom. Salvation sets us free; following empowers us to *live* free. The fact that God provides a next step shows His grace and kindness in our lives. When we Receive His Grace, we realize what is said of Jesus is true of us, and our identity changes. Once we realize our identity, the only natural response is to move into relationship with Him and Experience His Presence. Once we've experienced His presence we will be able to Release His Kingdom, which is our purpose. When we know who we are, who He is and what we're created to do, we are drawn into the Father's heart. Jesus is the way and the Father's heart is the destination, **(John 14:6)** our responsibility is to follow Jesus, one step at a time. **(Matthew 4:19)**. We don't take next steps to do something for God, we take next steps so God can show us all He's done for us.
- 3. We have a next step.** We all have a next step to take. To find out what our next step is, we ASK, LISTEN and RESPOND to God who is always speaking and wants us to hear His voice. **(John 10:4)** A next step is any belief or behavior that moves us forward on our journey with Jesus. We rest in Him but we never stop moving forward with Him. **(Psalm 32:8)** Jesus is the way out and Jesus is the way forward. So, focus on the Shepherd, not the next step, because the Good Shepherd is carrying His sheep. **(Deuteronomy 1:31)** The steps we take today will determine the freedom we will experience tomorrow.

DISCUSSION

- God speaks to us in sentences not paragraphs. What was the last sentence you heard from God? What was your response to the sentence? (See point #1)
- In Jesus we have nothing to achieve, earn, or prove but everything to receive, discover, and explore. This week, how can you intentionally focus on Jesus and what He's done for you? (See points #1 & #2)
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you? What is your next step?**

