

Getting Started

Share a time when something did not meet your expectations. Maybe it was something silly—a toy you wanted as a child. Maybe it was something significant—a job that wasn’t everything it seemed. Whatever.

How did you handle the disappointment?

What lessons—good or bad—did you learn from the experience?

Into the Bible

Consider Isaiah 60:1-6. What was Israel expecting their life would be like when they returned from exile?

According to Nehemiah 1:1-3, what did they get instead?

What psychological impact do you think it might have had that the events of Nehemiah were almost a century *after* the first exiles returned from Babylon?

Take a look at Matthew 19:16-30. Why did Jesus say it was hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven? What prompted that observation? What do you think that saying still means for people who have enough materially?

Why do you think the disciples were so astonished?

When Peter asks, “What will there be for us?” what do you think he is expecting?

When does Jesus say the reward will come? How do you suppose Peter and the guys felt about that?

Read the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). From a worldly point of view, do they describe winners or losers? In a world that values strength, how are attributes like meekness, mercy, and peaceableness viewed?

Digging Deeper

Do you struggle to embrace the ways of the kingdom? Is your instinct to stand up for yourself, to fight back? Or do you accept that gentleness means getting taken advantage of?

Does the *hope of glory* make the indignities of life in this fallen age any better for you? How might it?