

DEEPLY DEFINED

Opening Engagement

MAIN IDEA:

God is holy, and he relates to us in and through his holiness.

PRE-READING:

Members should read chapters 1-5 before group time.

OPENING ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONS:

What is the full definition of holiness? (Use the definitions section in the back of the book if needed).

How do we see this in how God relates to humanity?

How can we be holy as God is holy?

Holiness is to be separate, above, and beyond, yet choose to reach into the world and interact with it. For God, that means he reaches into time, creation, and our lives and interacts with us on an intimate and loving level through the Holy Spirit inside of us. For humanity striving for holiness, we reach into the world by loving and serving, yet not becoming part of it in our actions and mindset. The power of the holy spirit helps us live in holiness, but only God is and will ever be fully holy.

Discuss

Both the Greek (hagios) and Hebrew (qadosh) words for holiness include the idea of separateness or distance. If something is holy, it is distinct and different from other people or things. How does Isaiah 55:8-9 support this definition?

Job 26:14 ties together creation and the thoughts of God. It is at the end of verses 7-13 where we see a list of what is only a whisper, a mere breath, of what God's power can really do. As a group, list off what is compared to a whisper in these verses, and discuss why we couldn't ever possibly understand the thunder of his power.

God's power is glorious. Ask the group if they remember where the Hebrew word for glory comes from (battle armaments). Point out the literal meaning for glory is heavy or weighty, like a shield or bow would be in their hand. It also has taken on a sense of honor and importance.

God's glory is revealed to us when, in his holiness, God interacts with man. Remind the group that "Shekinah" means "that which dwells" and has to do with the Lords' presence. Ask for some Biblical examples of when God's glory was seen in the Bible. Ask how they may have experienced God's glory on a personal level.

When we experience God's glory and holiness, we can become deeply aware of our own sin. But Isaiah 57:15 encourages us, because God in his holiness, dwells in heaven, but also in the hearts of the humble and contrite (review definition of contrite - crushed or pulverized like powder).

Believers who truly experience God's holiness understand that "Our sin is worthless, not our soul."
Discuss that statement, and how humility is not hatred



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of oneself, but knowledge that you are a child of the Holy and glorious king who loves you and knows what is best for your life.

This leads us to live out 2 Corinthians 7:1. What contaminates the body and spirit? Sin. Discuss the definition of sin, and where the Hebrew word came from (archer's term).

Read Psalm 32:5. Write the three words for sin this section covered on a whiteboard (sin, transgression, and iniquity). Discuss the meaning of each.

Sin - To miss the mark, to fall short

Transgression/ Trespass - an active rebellion against authority, a willful deviation from what is right. Stepping over the boundaries of what God says is right.

Iniquity - comes from the word crookedness. A premeditated sin that continues in a person's life without remorse or repentance.

How do transgressions and iniquities "miss the mark" for holiness in our lives?

Read Psalm 32:1-2. Why are these people joyful? Compare and contrast with Micah 2:1. Compare joys and woes. Why is this?

Wraps It Up

End with reading Romans 6:1-7. In God's holiness - reaching down and interacting with his creation - he set us free from sin. Holiness and sin are quite the contrast, but there is one contrast even bigger.

The opposite of holiness isn't sin, or evil. The opposite of holiness and ordinary. Using the definition of holiness, discuss this concept.

Our lives are not meant to be ordinary. We cannot accept sin in our lives and be okay with living less than what God desires for us. We don't have to be perfect, but we should strive to "Be holy as I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

How can we live holy lives this week as we reach into the world and interact with others?

Closing Prayer

Thank the Lord that he is a holy, glorious, and personal God. Ask him to help us live holy lives as we strive to give him glory every day.

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