

## **LifeGroup Discussion guide**

### **Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> sermon**

**Sermon Summary-** Eph. 5:18 tells us to let the Holy Spirit fill and control us. Ron challenged us to think about whether we do this in our every day life. He used Jesus' trip to Nain as an example of Jesus' willingness to be controlled by God. Jesus was on a mission, but that mission was interrupted momentarily with God's mission for that moment. He introduced the "Fly on the Wall" events as a way to help us practice allowing the Spirit to fill and control us. Ron ended with the challenge from the message version of Romans 12:1-2 – "...fix your attention on God and you'll be changed from the inside out..." !

#### **Scripture Reference:**

Ephesians 5:18

#### **Specific Discussion Questions**

- 1) How much do you talk with God each day?
- 2) Do you allow the Holy Spirit to fill and control you? Why or why not?
- 3) Where do you find your identity – is it through your relationship with Jesus or in something of this world?
- 4) What steps will you take to increase your focus on the big M mission – living as a child of the King?

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# *LifeGroup Leader Notes*

## **Fly on the Wall**

### Sermon synopsis: **Practicing mission with a capital ‘M’**

Ron’s sermon focused on practicing the presence of God in all moments of our life. Ephesians 5:18 directs us to let the Holy Spirit fill and control us. The keys to doing this are (1) Prioritizing – see ‘Labeling Rocks’ notes, and (2) Practicing. People are always on a mission – being a good parent, being a good employee, getting an education, providing for others, etc. These are ‘missions’ with a lower-case ‘m’. They are not the ultimate mission of a child of God. The ultimate Mission (with a capital ‘M’) is *‘having a relationship with God’*. Matthew 6:32-34 tells us to not fuss over time and money but to “steep” our life in the God reality (NLT). Psalm 127:1-2 reminds us that unless the Lord is part of my job, being a parent, being a spouse, any task I attempt – we labor in vain. Practicing God’s presence is also something most of us need work at. Ultimately, our goal is to be aware of and resting in the presence of God at all times of our days. Jesus showed that this life can be lived. He continually followed God’s priority by letting God lead Him (Luke 7:11-16 – funeral procession; Luke 8:40-56). Jesus spent time in prayer so He could refresh, tune in, prioritize, and spend time with God (Mark 1:35). Brother Lawrence focused on practicing God’s presence – see some of his thoughts below. Frank Laubach also worked at practicing God’s presence – see some of his thoughts below. Maybe we suffer from spiritual ADD. One way to practice His presence is using the ‘Fly on the Wall’ concept. Go to an event, not for the reason of the event, but to go to pray. Spend time praying and asking to see God’s presence and pray for God’s will. Talk to God and let God talk to you. The “success” of the prayer is up to God. As we practice this “praying for God’s will” we will learn to do it all the time. Slowly, God in our life will not be confined to a certain time (Sunday AM or Wed PM) or a certain place (church) but will expand to be present everywhere all the time (Gen 28:15-16). Read Romans 12:1-2 from the Message translation – *“fix your attention on God and your life will be changed from the inside out”*.

### Scripture reading:

Key Verse: Eph 5:18

Other verses: Mat 6:32-34 (where to focus our priorities); Luke 7:11-16 (Jesus taking time to raise the widow’s dead son); Luke 8:40-56 (the people, Jarius, and the bleeding woman); Gen 28:15-16 (Jacob learns God is always present not just at specific places); Acts 2:38 (Repent from spending life as though it is my own and not God’s)

### Thoughts on practicing God’s presence:

- *“continually talking to Him”*; *“every moment talking to God”* – this is the ultimate goal of practicing His presence
- *“easy or difficult – just begin”*; *“make the resolution now”* – getting started is key and God gives grace if we fail
- *“are there periods where God is pushed out?”* – do we forget He is there?
- *“life is an experiment of bringing God back into my min every few seconds”* – Laubach set this as a goal for his life
- *“violin in harmony with the orchestra”* – strive to live life in harmony with the God of the universe
- *“religion is not dull”*; *“devotion is not sleepy”* – too much we get the wrong perspective on life with God

### More Discussion Options:

1. *Am I spending time as though it is mine and not God’s?*
2. *How much time do I spend training my mind to focus on and talk to God? Is it just the 15-minute-a-day challenge or is there more?*
3. *Do I chronologically categorize God into specific times (Sunday AM, Wed PM)? Can I allow God to fill me at other times during the week? When do I need Him to fill me the most?*
4. *Do I spatially categorize God into specific places (church)? Can places I spend a lot of time (home, job, store) be redeemed for God as places He can be encountered? Where do I need God to fill me most?*
5. *Do I see religion as dull and devotion (time with His presence) as sleepy?*

### Encouragement points:

- **Spiritual ADD** – *We will at times have a strong energy to change and practice God’s presence – this may last for a while and then dissipate. Remember that the God of grace allows us to turn around and start again. We may be distracted by life (new house, new job, sickness, anger, etc.) but God continues to call to us.*