**Table Talk**

**Sermon Series: God Selfie – Patient and Abounding In Steadfast Love**

**September 8, 2019**

**Introduction (10 min)**

Welcome everyone to your Table Talk small group. Watch the introductory video and share the story below, then open up the discussion with the questions provided.

**Table Talk Video: God Selfie – Patient and Abounding In Steadfast Love**

Around 15 years ago, I was given the opportunity to preach in a revival in a small church in southern Ohio. My best friend was on staff there as an associate pastor and he was gathering a collection of musicians and preachers from Mount Vernon Nazarene University to hold a revival at his church.

We had an extremely gifted worship team, and the preaching team consisted of several very effective preachers, many of them my closest friends at MVNU. It was my privilege to preach the closing service of the revival and the topic was sanctification. I preached as powerfully as the Spirit allowed me that night and shared the truth that God desires to not just forgive our mistakes, but to empower us with his Holy Spirit so that we can live a life of victory over sin. Yes, we will face temptation. But, the power and calling of God can see us through temptation without having to give in to it.

At the end of the service, the altar at that small church was flooded with people consecrating their lives to the Lord and seeking the infilling of his Holy Spirit. We spent a lot of time praying with individuals and talking to them after the service. Some reported victory, that God had done something nearly unexplainable in their heart. There was freedom.

But the most moving experience of that revival was the little old lady who spoke to me on her way out the door. She encouraged me to keep preaching this message to people who were young enough to receive it. She said she had pushed God away for too long and there was no hope left for her to be sanctified. My heart broke. This dear saint, this woman who had been following God for years, doubted that God could be so patient or longsuffering enough to offer her victory over her struggles.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 says, “It is God’s will that you be sanctified.” It does NOT go on to say, “unless you waited too long, then he doesn’t care about you anymore.” God is patient, longsuffering, slow to anger. There is nothing you have done that can undo God’s love for you. There is nowhere you can go beyond God’s reach of redemption. If you are 8 or 80, God is inviting you to experience and share in his character.

-Pastor Reggie

1. Have you ever gone through a season of life where you felt like you had gone too far or done too many things for God to set you free?

**Prayer (3 minutes)**

Pray for God to reveal his patience and steadfast love for you and your group as you study his Word together.

**Digging In (24 minutes)**

**Read Exodus 34:6**

1. Ask a few different people to read that verse out loud from their Bible and compare the different versions. Which of the translations that were read was your favorite and why?
2. The middle of this verse focuses on two characteristics: patience and steadfast love. As a group, take a minute and describe what you think each of these words means.
3. Do you ever find it hard to believe that either of these characteristics reveal perfectly who God is? Do your circumstances ever make you feel like these are not true?

**Read Exodus 32:1**

1. God had revealed himself to Moses and the elders of Israel in Exodus 24:9-11. Then God called Moses to stay with him while he received the Law and the 10 Commandments (Exodus 24:12). Quickly, these people forgot God and fell into sin. How does this demonstrate the need for a God who is patient and steadfast in love?
2. God’s presence was visible on the mountain (Exodus 24:17-18) so why do you think the Israelites were quick to give up on Moses?
3. When they give up on Moses, they don’t look for another leader to take his place, they make a new idol. Why didn’t they just replace Moses instead of trying to replace God?

**Read Exodus 33:1-3**

1. By creating an idol, the people had already told God that they didn’t want him, so his offer to give them the land he promised is extra generous. Have you ever seen God give you things you know you didn’t deserve?
2. God had already promised the Israelites that He would bless them with the material possessions, especially the land that they wanted. Why wasn’t this enough?
3. If God promised that you could have everything you wanted and that he would give you these things, then make himself scarce, would it be appealing or appalling to you?

**Digging Out (8 minutes)**

**Read Exodus 34:8-9**

1. Does Moses ever portray the Israelites as worthy of God’s blessing?
2. What clues are we given in this verse about the type of attitude that Moses had when he asked God for this blessing?
3. Moses knew they would inherit the blessing of God’s promises, but what did he mean when he asked God to take the people as God’s inheritance?

**Read Exodus 34:10-14**

1. In spite of their sins and mistakes, why do you think God was still willing to make this promise to the Israelites?
2. Patience is literally translated from the Hebrew to mean, “slow to angers.” How do you see this characteristic of God in this story?
3. The Hebrew word translated “steadfast love” describes the love of God displayed over the long haul which reveals just how loving, gracious, merciful, just, kind and compassionate God really is. How do you see this kind of love in this passage?

**Taking It Home (5 minutes)**

After discussing the Bible verses above, consider the following personal challenge.

1. Have you ever been quick to forget the ways God has revealed himself to you?
2. How have you seen the patience and steadfast love of God in your life recently?
3. Are you willing to believe God is patient and God loves you, even when you make mistakes or commit sin?

**Wrapping Up (2 minutes)**

To the best of your ability, summarize the main points of your group’s discussion and help them make meaningful connections with the scriptures.

**Scripture Challenge (5 minutes)**

Here is your chance for a mulligan. If you didn’t memorize this verse last week, you can try again. Memorize Exodus 34:6, Write it down and carry it in your pocket or tape it somewhere visible like your mirror or dashboard. May it remind you of just who this God is who has come to us in patient, steadfast love.

**Prayer (3 minutes)**

Pray that God would help you to believe he is patient and steadfast in love, and that God would fill you with the same patience and steadfast love for others that He has shown to you.