

CHAPTER FOUR

Feeding the Frustration

The Big Picture ...

We've spent three weeks focusing on discovering our holy discontent. Now it's time to look at what to do once we've found it. In chapter three, Bill Hybels says the best way to fan the flame of your discontent is to get close to it.

Prepare

Read chapter four in *Holy Discontent*, and look over the verses below.

Ice-Breaker

What super-power would you most like to have, and why?

(Leader's Note: Sometimes we try to relate the question to the study. This one's just for fun. If you can find a connection, make it! Just don't think there's a deep one in there somewhere.)

Hybels' Words

'Opt in' to that 'one thing'

"The tendency for most of us when we encounter stuff that creates *dis*-ease and frustration in our souls is to push it away. And fast! We feel the discomfort of holy discontentedness coming on, and reflexively we want to medicate it. We want to recoil in disgust at the dreadful realities surrounding us. We want to head to Blockbuster to rent another movie just to stay distanced from it. **But the truth is this: the best thing you can do is to move *toward* your area of holy discontent until you have clear direction from God as to what action you should take to resolve it.** For example, if the plight of the poor becomes your holy discontent, then *increase* your exposure to the poor. I'm serious here: Move *toward* the poor, not away from them. Rearrange your life so you can see afresh the horrific conditions that some people are forced to live in. Embrace the uneasiness that enters in when you listen with unsullied ears to the frustration of those who are trapped in cycles of generational poverty."
- *Holy Discontent*, p. 67-68

Discuss

1. How do you feel about these texts? Do you agree? Disagree? Why?
2. Have you ever experienced the desire to block out or get away from discomfort like this? Share.
3. Have you ever been pushed toward a problem that bothered you? If so, what happened?
4. Hybels says you should move toward your holy discontent until you have a clear direction from God as to how to resolve it. What does this mean?
5. What are some ways to listen to God as we're living in the middle of our holy discontent?

God's Words

Read: Matthew 9:1-13

Jesus heals a paralytic

¹Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. ²Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."

³At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!"

⁴Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? ⁵Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? ⁶But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." ⁷And the man got up and went home. ⁸When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to men.

The Calling of Matthew

⁹As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors

and 'sinners'?"

¹²On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.

¹³But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Discuss

Use some or all of the following questions to talk about the Scriptures.

1. What do you find encouraging in this passage?
2. What is confusing to you? (*Discuss these things as a group, looking for other scriptural backing for your conclusions.*)
3. What challenges you?
4. What does the passage teach you about God and his character?
5. How do you need to respond to God this week because of this information?
6. The Pharisees continually got mad at Jesus for spending time with "sinners." To put this into the language of our study, Jesus demonstrated with his life how to feed a holy discontent. He spent time with the people who needed him the most - those who were far from God (Jesus said his mission was to proclaim that the kingdom of God was at hand). How can we learn from Jesus' example?
7. Do you see other times in Jesus' life where he was close to the people/parts of life he was most passionate about? Where?
8. How can you get closer to the things that bother you?

Your Words

We pick one thing from *Holy Discontent* to talk about each week, but what stood out to you?

1. What did you like best?
2. What challenged you or did you disagree with?
3. What did you learn that opened your eyes to a new side of God?
4. What do you need to apply from the reading?

Close

Don't forget to take time to share prayer requests!

Leader's Notes

We've purposely reversed the order of Hybels' Words and God's Words this week. Spend time looking at the book excerpt, but allow the time in Scripture to take up the bulk of your study.

In the God's Words section, the first five questions are meant to allow the group to talk in general about the scripture. Pick and choose from these as you see fit. Don't forget to focus on the application questions, though! (The ones that ask how we can apply what we're learning to our lives.) If the conversation goes in a different direction than the study, let it! Flesh out the questions you have as a group about what is happening in the passage and what God may be showing you.

The final few questions in the God's Words section are meant to bring the scripture together with the reading. Take time to talk about what Jesus did, and spend time allowing to group to talk about how they can move toward their holy discontents.