

Stronger Faith for Today #1 To Form a Resilient Identity, Experience Intimacy with Jesus

Questions for Reflection and Study by Individuals and Groups

Read Jeremiah 31:31-34

Jeremiah was a prophet to those going into exile in Babylon, a foreign land with a culture often opposed to worshiping the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

1. In what ways does living in NZ sometimes feel like living in a foreign land with a culture often opposed to worshiping the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?
2. What are some of the joys and dangers of the digital age we live in, surrounded by screens?

The Barna research (see Faith for Exiles, by David Kinnaman) observes that resilient disciples have an intimate relationship with Jesus to keep their faith strong.

3. What are some things that make you feel distant from Jesus?

The research showed the importance of replacing wrong ideas from our culture about who we are and what our purpose is, with right ideas from God.

Martin said, "The truest thing about human identity, life and purpose, is not what our screens tell us (social media, movies, websites), but what our Creator tells us."

We are created in God's image, with essential worth and dignity, and our purpose is to glorify God and enjoy him forever, as we follow his Son Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord, being restored and transformed, and participating in God's mission to the world he loves.

4. Can you think of a time when God revealed his ways to you and gave you a heart to follow them? (Jer 31:33) How did it happen? Who was involved? What spiritual practices were you employing?
5. What do you see as the difference between rules and relationship? (religious rules versus relationship with Jesus)
6. What are some of the big questions you would like to ask about God or life and faith today? Where could you find a safe place to ask them? How are you helping your family and friends, especially young people, ask their big questions in a safe way without giving them a pat answer?
7. Review the practices which have helped you grow closer to Jesus in the past. Are there any of those practices you would like to refresh and reapply in your life now? Are there any new spiritual practices you feel God might be leading you to try to build your relationship with him?

Consider personal practices: prayer, bible reading, fasting, solitude, silence, journaling, study, etc.

Consider also group practices: worship, celebration, prayer together, serving, confession, etc.

See resources on our website on spiritual practices:

<http://www.etchurch.co.nz/resources/other-resources>