

Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

Return from Exile

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Introduction

The Bible traces the history of God's people through several periods of exile. In Genesis, Adam and Eve are exiled from the presence of God, out of the Garden of Eden. In Exodus, the Israelites are exiled in Egypt and wander in the wilderness for 40 years trying to reach Canaan, the promised land. In Daniel, we learn that many Israelites are captured and exiled in Babylon, waiting to go home to the land of Israel. In our generation, we may experience a form of exile as our relationship with God feels disconnected in some ways. We may feel that we are not good enough, longing to achieve more. We may feel like the Israelites travelling through the desert, not knowing where our home is. But God has promised a way home and a stairway back to His presence - the return from exile is through the door which is found in His son, Jesus.

Read

Genesis 3:21-24

Discuss

1. What comes to mind and what are some initial feelings when you hear the word 'exile'? What about the word 'home'? What does it look like for you to be 'home'?
2. Exile has always been part of a believer's life. Why do you think that is? Have you ever experienced the feeling of exile in your life?
3. Read Exodus 4:10-11 and 2 Corinthians 12:9. Like Moses and Paul, we all have weaknesses in which God desires to partner with us. Have you ever felt inadequate or unable to meet the expectations for a role? Why is it challenging to face this insecurity?

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4. If we are complete and adequate, we will not need God. He has made us with our weaknesses so that in Him, through Jesus, we are made complete. In the light of this, why do we often try to make ourselves feel complete by chasing the world or by pursuing achievements?
5. Pastor Heather mentioned that what is good in our eyes may not be good in the eyes of God. What could hinder us from using God's perspective? What could be the challenges from knowing what is good in God's perspective?
6. Being exiled from God can create a feeling of incompleteness and emptiness in our heart. God has promised restoration, a way for us to return from exile and that He can fill the emptiness of our hearts. Is there something that is hindering you from allowing God to fill the emptiness of your heart? How can this group help and support you?

Respond

For this week, pray that you will allow the Holy Spirit to open your heart to God's promise to receive His grace and renew your relationship with Him. What is one inadequacy that you can talk to Jesus about? Commit it to Him and let Him restore and complete His work in you.