

He Chose the Nails Viewer Guide

Session 3: He Chose to Invite Us into His Presence

Discussion Questions:

1. What part of the teaching had the most impact on you?

Receiving the Gift of God's Presence

2. Imagine you have been offered the opportunity to spend an hour with someone you admire and respect but have never met.
 - a. Briefly describe who your admired person is and how you would most enjoy spending your time with him or her. What would you like to do together? What would you most like to talk about?
 - b. Now imagine that when you arrive for your appointment, you are told that although you will indeed be spending an hour with your admired person, there will be a curtain between the two of you the entire time. How would it change the way you had hoped to spend your time together? To what degree would the curtain diminish your ability to enjoy the visit? A little, a lot or somewhere between?
3. What kind of things – places, people, events, or activities – are thought to be holier and closer to God than others.
 - a. Overall, would you say that this mindset tends to be more prevalent or less prevalent among Christians? Share the reasons for your response.
 - b. How does the parallel between the temple curtain and Christ's body help you understand what Christ's death on the cross really accomplished? What might have been less clear or harder to understand if the temple curtain had not been torn?

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- c. What comes to mind when you imagine yourself stepping into the Most Holy Place in the temple? In what ways, if any, does imagining yourself there physically shift your perspective on what it means to access God's presence in your everyday life?

4. God is in holy places but not in every place.
God was at work in that time but not in our time.
God is present over there but not right now.
God could show up then but not now.
God is present in sacred things but not in secular things.

Which of these statements represents a compartmentalization you are most likely to default to?

5. Max pointed out that guilt is a curtain of the heart we sometimes use to shield ourselves from God's presence.
 - a. Which of the following statements comes closest to describing what you tend to shield yourself from when guilt comes between you and God? Share the reasons for your response.

When I put up as a guilt curtain ...

I am shielding myself from my expectation of God's anger or disappointment.

I am shielding myself from facing God until I can get my act together.

I am shielding myself from my own shame.

I am shielding myself from confessing my failure.

I am shielding myself from making restitution to others.

I am shielding myself from making necessary changes.

Other:

- b. "God isn't angry with you," Max said. "He already dealt with your mistake. The door is open and God invites you in." As you consider the statement you identified with above, how would you describe God's invitation to you when you use guilt as a shield? At those times, what might choosing an integrated life – dropping the curtain – require of you?