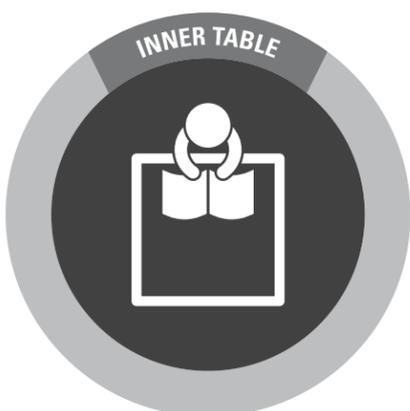


Sermon Notes

“Fruit Trees and Fig Leaves”
October 13th, 2019



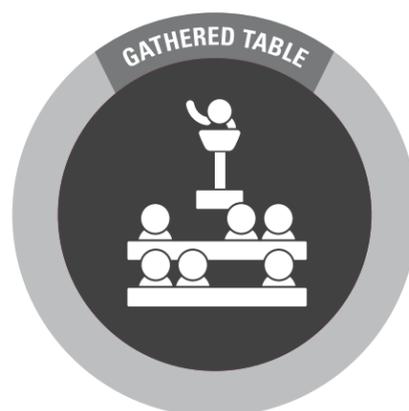
**First
Friends**
Church



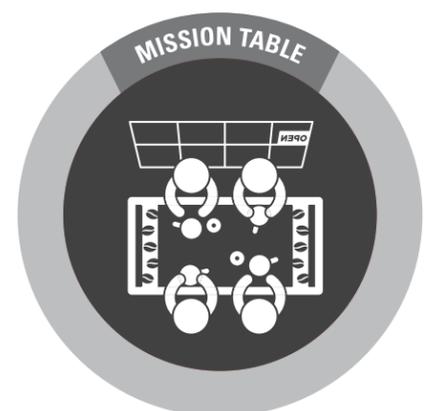
Seeking God
in Solitude



Finding God
in Friendship



Celebrating God
in Community



Reflecting God
in Relationships

Reflection Questions *(please use these individually or in groups)*

Discussion Questions:

1. What images and characteristics of Satan, or demonic power, have you been given in your life? Where did they come from? Are they accurate?
2. Are you struggling with some sort of doubt? Ask God to build your faith in the anchor of his presence.
3. Do you struggle with telling the truth, especially when it's hard? Pray that the Spirit would form your heart and mind so that you can speak the truth with grace and compassion.
4. Thank God for ten blessings that you have in your life today.
5. Which cultural influences have the most power to nudge you into the center of your world?

Additional Questions:

6. Why are half-truths so dangerous? Do you think we justify telling them because there is still some element of truth in them? In telling them, are we deceiving ourselves as much as others?

Devotional Reading & Inward Reflection

- **Genesis 3:1-7** | Is it easy to find discontentment in life? How often do you reflect on the good gifts God has provided you?
- **James 1:2-8** | Do you believe “doubt” can be a good thing? Is there a cultural perception of shame surrounding doubt? Do you have a story of how God has used your doubts for growth?
- **John 8:42-47** | Is it possible we don't understand or recognize evil because it is speaking in our “native tongue?”
- **Matthew 20:24-28** | In what ways does your life model Jesus' blueprint of service? Do you struggle to find the time or reasoning to help other people? What can you give up in order to do so?

Self-Care Disciplines *(Excerpts from A Guidebook to Prayer by Mary Kate Morse)*

October Discipline: Prayer | Creative Prayer (p. 36-38)

Creative prayer is one of the highest forms of prayer, and yet there is no quality standard to its expression. It simply connects us to one of God's primary impulses - to create good things. Not because the thing itself is beautiful or perfect, but because the thing reflects something of the nature and imagination of God and thus draws us to God. Creative prayer is giving God access to areas of our inner life often neglected. Being creative connects us with our essence and with God's nature.

1. Decide what creative prayer experience you might like to do. This can be something completely new and different that will stretch you, or you can do some creative activity you're used to doing. A few suggestions might be: gardening, painting, woodworking, cooking, crafting, photographing, writing etc.
2. Decide how much time you will devote to this, whether 15-30 minutes, several hours, or somewhere in between.
3. Begin with silence to instill a reflective God-focused spirit in you. If you get completely immersed in the project and forget to think about God as part of it, don't worry. Simply come back to God's presence with you.
4. At the end of the time, journal on your experience. Is this a form of prayer that might feed your soul? Did you feel close to God? How did you experience God?

Note: Don't let these burden you each week. Please engage only if you feel it would be beneficial in caring for yourself. Sometimes self-care involves giving yourself a break, even from self care disciplines.