



ZIMZUM DISCIPLESHIP VIDEO LESSON #5: IMPERFECTION SMALL GROUP SESSION 1 - GENERAL OVERVIEW

GATHERING

Opening Prayer:

Holy One, you created us in your image and invited us to become fully who you have made us to be. We have often thought that meant we needed to find perfection as fallible human beings, yet you desired us to grow into maturity. Help us to know that in you we find wholeness through our weakness. *Amen.*

Begin with brief check-ins and the opening questions below:

Opening Questions:

How has it been practicing zimzum discipleship and silence? Have you found time for quiet contemplation in your busy life?

Content Study

- Watch the video on Imperfection found at ecwww.org/zimzum-discipleship.

Reading: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

"It is necessary to boast; nothing is to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—was caught up into paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it

would leave me, but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.' So I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ, for whenever I am weak, then I am strong."

Use *lectio divina* ("divine reading") for this passage.

- Read the text slowly aloud. Sit for a time and notice where your heart takes you
- Meditate on a word or phrase that has caught your attention. Or imagine taking on a role in this narrative and playing it over again in your mind
- Pray the passage aloud slowly again, or simply pray the word or phrase that has taken your attention
- Quietly consider how this passage might lead you to live more faithfully as a disciple of Jesus, and let the Spirit guide you as to next steps for contemplative living.

Reflection Questions

- What did you make of today's lesson on imperfection?
- Recent studies show anxiety growing in our society, and especially among teens and young adults due to feeling the need to be perfect. Phil mentioned his experience with adults as well, and some pulling back from a church community when they experienced trouble in life. Without trying to solve this in others, what do you think is contributing to this in our society? How might this thinking be broken down, especially among a gathering of disciples? Why do we feel the need to hide our imperfections?
- Phil described carrying a malachite stone to lay down at the Cruz de Ferro—the Iron Cross—the highest point on the Camino de Santiago in Spain. For him that stone represented perfectionism. What might that stone metaphorically be for you? What weight do you carry for which you need God's grace?
- The Daily Examen is the spiritual practice for this session. This Ignatian practice begins by settling ourselves, and asking the Spirit to guide us through the past 24 hours of our lives. After a few moments, we then ask two related questions: For which moment in the past day am I most grateful? For which moment am I least grateful? Allowing the Spirit to guide us, we can share this with others gathered around us, write it in a journal, or simply note it in our own hearts. If there is a need to make repair, either with God or others, pray for guidance, and then finally, give thanks to God for being with you in the midst of every aspect of your life. Try this practice now.

Final Reflections

- What has captured your heart or your imagination in today's discussion?
- Where have you seen God—or Love—recently?
- What might you intentionally do over the next 2-4 weeks to bring you closer to God?

Closing Prayer

Almighty and Eternal God, you sacrificially withdrew from a place within yourself in order to create the entirety of the cosmos so that you might be in relationship with us and all of creation. Help us to embrace zimzum discipleship and make space in our own lives, that we might more faithfully follow in the way of Jesus who gave of himself for the salvation and healing of the whole world. All this we ask in the name of the Risen Christ, who dwells endlessly with you and the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*