

### **Warm-Up Activity**

1. Pre-prepare a list of 'commands' that each member must follow for a period you deem comfortable (perhaps throughout the warm-up question, or for 10 minutes etc.). Have each member draw a command from a bowl, then 'vow' or 'promise' to keep them for the time allotted, as the meeting progresses. Here are some examples:
  - a. Sit on the floor cross-legged
  - b. Two people sit arm-in-arm
  - c. Cross your right leg over your left
  - d. Hold your left forearm with you right hand
  - e. Keep your hands fisted
  - f. Keep your hands folded together
  - g. Keep your hands on your legs
  - h. Stand with your back against a wall
  - i. Sit with your hands resting behind your neck

Continue with your meeting and see how long the members can obey their commands. When the first person breaks a command, ask the group:

1. How much of your attention and focus was needed to carry out your command? Were you able to track with the conversation or did it take focus away to obey the command?
2. How much easier would it have been to complete the command were purposeful, and if you were alone – set apart from the distraction and activity?

### **Warm-Up Questions**

1. Have you ever experienced a time in which you were separated from other people for a purpose? (Covid quarantine is a great example, or to study for an exam, take a crying baby out of a gathering, move to a new city).
2. Describe any benefits this time of separation brought to you.
3. Describe any negative effects this time of separation brought you.
4. Briefly describe what this time of separation taught you.

### **Can You Relate?**

In this week's Scripture (Numbers 6:1-27) God outlines what He expects from a person who takes the Nazarene Vow, a man or woman who separates from others and abstains from certain things for the purpose of serving and drawing nearer to the Lord. If not born into the Nazarene lifestyle, these people promised God that they would devote themselves to Him for this time. Those who take this vow promised not to drink or consume any portion of a grapevine; not to cut their hair or beards; and not to go anywhere near a dead body. These promises helped ensure the person would maintain an attitude of purity for the vowed amount of time, as they worshipped Him in this manner.

1. We all make promises. Name a promise or vow that you have made and kept.

2. What did you think enabled you to keep that promise or vow?
3. Have you ever made a promise or a vow to someone that you could not keep? What was that promise?
4. What repercussions did this broken promise have on your relationship? On you?
5. Have you ever made a promise or a vow to God? (This could be a promise to fast or pray, stay off social media for a period of time, marriage vows, to turn away from a specific sin)
6. Have you been able to keep that promise? If so, how? If not, why?
7. Name a few benefits of your either keeping, or the fallout from failing to keep, promises and vows to God?

### **Live it Out**

Those who took the Nazarene Vow were setting themselves apart for service and devotion to the LORD. Unless born a Nazarene, the time allotment for the vow could be as little as 30 days.

What impacts do you think it had on a non-Nazarene Israelite to step away from their everyday lives, and live totally focused on and devoted to God for 30 days?

Read Romans 12:1-2. From this passage, list Paul's appeals:

What are the benefits we reap when we put these appeals into action in our lives?

Like a Nazarene, we are all called to set ourselves apart for the Lord – not for a period of 30 days, but for a lifetime. Thankfully, instead of guidelines and grapevines to follow, God has graciously given us His Word as our guidebook, and The Holy Spirit as our guide. Our vow is to obey God, and our benefit is we become more like Him as we live our lives in a way that honors Him – as we are dedicated TO Him and set apart FOR Him in our words and actions as a *lifestyle* of worship.

Have you set yourself apart for the LORD? If yes, describe what that looks like in your life.

If not, do you want to be? Talk with your group members.

*Bless one another, or have one person bless the group, by reading Numbers 6:24-26 aloud:*

*"The LORD bless and keep you;*

*The LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you*

*The LORD lift His countenance upon you and give you peace."*

**Encourage your group to commit time to pray for one another, encourage one another, meet each other's needs, fellowship together and interceded for each other as the Lord leads. Encourage them to continue to meet and to return for the next scheduled gathering.**