**Table Talk**

**Sermon Series: God Selfie – Merciful and Gracious**

**September 1, 2019**

**Introduction (10 min)**

Welcome everyone to your Table Talk small group. Watch the introductory video and share the story below, then open up the discussion with the questions provided.

**Table Talk Video: God Selfie – Merciful and Gracious**

There are places in scripture where God gives us a quick, clear snapshot of his character, almost like God took a selfie. This week’s selfie:

God is merciful and gracious, at all times and in all places. Not just because we want him to be. Not because we need him to be. Not even because we always see it that way in our own circumstances. But because that is who God is. At times, we are blessed to see this revelation of his character first hand.

Almost two years ago God blessed us with Annabelle. After a few days of great nursing care but little sleep, we were ready to go home to our boys and begin our life as a family of five. We were told a nurse would discharge us right after lunch. So we ordered our food and packed up our stuff. We quickly ate and told the nurses we were ready.

You aren’t allowed to simply walk out; there is a very strict check out process. So we kept waiting. An hour passed and we checked with the nurses. Everyone was busy but it would be soon they said. Another hour passed and our request netted the same response.

We were tired. Annabelle was tired. Dinner was approaching, which we hadn’t bothered to request since we hadn’t planned to be there. We were again waiting on a response as to when we could leave and when a nurse would be there to wheel Ashley and Annabelle out per hospital policy. Ashley put Annabelle down in the clear bassinette for a nap while we waited.

A few minutes later, Annabelle gasped and stopped breathing. In a few seconds she was turning purple and had arched her back and neck so hard that she was stiff when Ashley picked her up. I ran to the hall and yelled for a nurse. The nurse started running my way and yelled back that the doctor on call was in the nursery.

We ran together and we prayed together.

The doctor was able to use a syringe to pull mucus from her throat, and flush her sinuses of residual amniotic fluid with saline. Our baby girl again gasped and then screamed. Her purple skin turned red as she cried and we cried right along with her! God graciously granted the breath of life to our daughter and mercifully spared us from our worst fears.

Had we left sooner, Annabelle’s episode would have either happened while driving down interstate 95 or with us all alone at home. We wouldn’t have known what to do, or may not have done it correctly. Our frustrating delay was an agent of God’s grace, his merciful deliverance for our baby girl!

God is merciful and gracious! I will be forever thankful for the times that we can see this revelation of his character first hand.

-Pastor Reggie

1. Can you think of a time when you glimpsed a selfie of the mercy and graciousness of God first hand?

**Prayer (3 minutes)**

Pray for God to give you a revelation of his divine character as you study his Word together.

**Digging In (18 minutes)**

**Read Genesis 27:6-10, 15-19**

1. Sometimes a selfie isn’t very honest. What did Jacob do to alter his appearance to look like someone else?
2. What was Jacob trying to gain by not presenting an honest description of himself?
3. Do you think this deception has a positive or negative effect on his relationships with his family?

**Read Matthew 23:27-28**

1. What is the “selfie” that the religious leaders were trying to portray to the people?
2. Jesus in essence reposted their selfie and tagged it #nofilter #nophotoshop #transparency. What new image did Jesus reveal to the people about who the Pharisees were at heart?
3. If Jesus were to repost a #nofilter version of the selfie you portray to the world, would it look different?

**Read 1 Samuel 16:6-7**

1. Have you ever been fooled by someone’s selfie? Have you ever assumed something positive about their character based on a superficial facade?
2. Is God ever fooled by our pretending, excuses, or false representations of our character?

**Digging Out (14 minutes)**

**Read Exodus 33:14-16**

1. The point of a selfie is usually to capture how good we look or the amazing background we are standing in front of. What does Moses want his selfie to feature for the world to see?
2. If God were to appear next to you in every picture you took, would it change the way you are acting in the picture?
3. God has already promised to give Moses just about every blessing he could imagine – land, wealth, power. But Moses turns all of those blessings down in favor of God’s presence. What are you willing to turn down in order to get closer to God?

**Read Exodus 34:6-9**

1. God gives Moses a perfect selfie – first of his physical presence, then of his character. What most stands out to you about this selfie?
2. Moses’ immediate response to God’s revelation is to worship. When is the last time you experienced God’s presence and it drove you to your knees in worship?
3. Then Moses takes God’s selfie and responds in faith, asking God to act based on the character He revealed. What steps are you actively taking to trust God based on the ways He has revealed himself to you?

**Taking It Home (5 minutes)**

After discussing the Bible verses above, consider the following personal challenge.

1. Have you ever asked God to reveal himself to you? If God allowed you to stand in his presence and see him, would it change your faith? Should it?
2. Are you more prone to react to your circumstances or act based on God’s character? Do you believe your life is impacted more by what God says about himself or by the momentary circumstances you face?

**Wrapping Up (2 minutes)**

To the best of your ability, summarize the main points of your group’s discussion and help them make meaningful connections with the scriptures.

**Scripture Challenge (5 minutes)**

As a group, try to memorize Exodus 34:6. Write it out and say it out loud together several times. Rest in the revelation of God’s own character, and share his selfie with others this week!

**Prayer (3 minutes)**

Pray that God would reveal himself to each of you, and that you would learn to love, trust, and live into his character, reflecting it to the world.