



# DIDN'T SEE IT COMING

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OVERCOMING THE 5 GREATEST CHALLENGES  
THAT NO ONE EXPECTS AND EVERYONE EXPERIENCES

**GROUP QUESTIONS**





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## **Part One: Kicking Cynicism in the Teeth**

You never thought you'd be a cynic, did you? Nobody wants to be cynical, but so many people end up there. Why? Cynicism starts not because you don't care, but because you do. Surprisingly, most cynics are former optimists. We'll look at how cynicism starts, how to recognize it and how to stop it.

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 1:2-8,16-18, Ephesians 1:15-20 NLT

**Bottom Line:** To kick cynicism in the teeth, stay curious. And trust again, hope again, believe again.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. When you were younger, would you have considered yourself an optimist, a realist or a pessimist? What are you now? Why?
2. What do you think makes people grow cynical?
3. Read what Carey called "the cynics guide to the universe" in Ecclesiastes 1:2-8,16-18 (the rest of Ecclesiastes is pretty insightful too). According to this text, what makes your sorrow increase? Why?
4. "Cynics project past failures onto future situations." Have you seen that happen? How?
5. It can be so hard to trust again, to hope again and to believe again after you've stopped hoping, trusting and believing. How does Ephesians 1:15-20 show you that God will help you do that?
6. "The curious are never cynical and the cynical are never curious." Discuss.
7. What could help grow your curiosity?

## **Moving Forward**

Decide what you need to do to hope again, to believe again and to trust again. As hard as it can be, ask God to give you the strength to put your heart in your hand and hope, trust and believe again.

And to help even more, cultivate curiosity. This week, ask some more questions. Stay more open...and be curious.

## **Changing Your Mind**

"I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead." Ephesians 1:19-20 NLT



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## **Part Two: Disconnection**

We've never been more connected as a culture, and we've never felt more alone. Many experts are beginning to call loneliness a cultural epidemic. Why is it that we can have 500 friends on social media and feel so utterly alone? A devious disconnect is underway in our culture, and it's not just a tech problem...it's a human problem.

**Scripture:** James 5:13-18 NLT

**Bottom Line:** Love has a speed, and it's slower than you are.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. What part of technology do you love the most, and what do you dislike the most?
2. What does it feel like (to you) to be ignored by others when you're in the same room? How often are you guilty of doing that same thing to someone else?
3. Imagine the kinds of conversations and relationships early Christians had as you read through James 5:13-18. Does anyone really know you as well as the early believers knew each other? Why or why not?
4. "Disconnection isn't a technology problem; it's a human problem." Discuss.
5. What would it take for you to truly slow down and move at the speed of love?

## **Moving Forward**

This week, put in to practice a few (or all) of the practical suggestions in the Disconnect to Reconnect section of Didn't See It Coming (pages 81-83). Decide to change your habits. Create some technology free zones. Put your phone on 'do not disturb' most of the day. Sit down and have dinner with the people you care about 5 nights this week. You choose how to do it, just commit to disconnecting to reconnect. After all, intimacy never happens in a hurry.

## **Changing Your Mind**

"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." James 5: 16



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## **Part Three: Pride**

Most people think pride is a problem narcissists struggle with. What if they're wrong? What if pride is bigger than that? What if most pride springs not from narcissism, but from insecurity. As strange as it might sound, your insecurity may be driving your pride and causing you all kind of problems that you can easily solve if you overcome your insecurity. We'll show you how.

**Scripture:** Philippians 2:3-8 NLT

**Bottom Line:** Only humility will get you out of what pride got you into.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Describe an incident that caused you to feel embarrassed or humiliated (along the lines of what Carey shared in the message).
2. What do you dislike about proud people?
3. How many of the five signs of insecurity on pages 119-121 of Didn't See It Coming do you recognize in yourself?
4. Read Philippians 2:3-8. Why do you think God reveals himself as humble ... and challenges you to become humble too?
5. Only humility will get you out of what pride got you into. In what areas do you need to start practicing humility this week?

## **Moving Forward**

Fortunately for all of us, humble is a habit. On pages 132-129 of Didn't See It Coming, Carey outlines 5 habits of the humble

1. Never lose your gratitude
2. Take the low place
3. Open your notebook
4. Push other people into the spotlight
5. Get ridiculously honest with yourself and God).

Which do you think is the most important for you to embrace this week?  
How will you embrace that habit?

## **Changing Your Mind**

"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." Philippians 2:3-4 NLT



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## **Part Four: Emptiness**

So many people get surprised by something that generation after generation of successful people encounter: success is emptier than they ever dreamed. Even when all your dreams come true, you may feel grateful. But feeling grateful doesn't leave you full? Why does success feel so empty? We'll look at why that is, and what to do about it.

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 1: 2-8, Ecclesiastes 2: 1-11 NLT

**Bottom Line:** The only thing more terrifying than dying to yourself...is living for yourself.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. If you won the lottery or somehow came into the kind of money, power and influence Solomon did, what do you think you would do with it all? (Be honest...don't say you'd donate it all to charity and go live in a convent just because you're talking to church people...)
2. In Ecclesiastes 1: 2-8, Solomon says that rivers run into the sea, but the sea is never full. No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are never content. To what extent have you seen this principle at work in your life or the life of those around you?
3. According to Ecclesiastes 2: 1-11, how did Solomon try to fill the hole inside him?
4. In the message, Carey described what he calls the 'cycle of accumulation:' more, better, different, despair. To what extent have you experienced that cycle. How has it left you feeling?
5. There's no end to the sad discontent of making you the mission of your life. Discuss.
6. How might working toward a Kingdom that's bigger than you (The Kingdom of God) help solve the emptiness you feel inside?

## **Moving Forward**

The Christian life is about finding new life in Christ, but the life you find in Jesus comes on the other side of dying to yourself. While dying to yourself may seem terrifying, it's a far better alternative than living for yourself. When you find yourself empty, come humbly before God and surrender the Kingdom of Me and once again embrace the Kingdom of God.

## **Changing Your Mind**

"No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content." Ecclesiastes 1:8 NLT



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## **Part Five: Burnout**

Burnout seems to almost be an epidemic these days. And a surprising number of people who perhaps haven't fully burned out still test positive for the signs of burnout. We'll look at what causes burnout, how to know you're in it and how to get back. Plus we'll touch on suicide and why the voices you may be hearing are lying.

**Scripture:** 1 Kings 19:1-9 NLT

**Bottom Line:** Live in a way today that will help you thrive tomorrow.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Have you ever been in a period of burnout, or been close to someone who has? What was it like?
2. Why do you think burnout is such a common experience for so many people today?
3. Are there elements of Elijah's story in 1 Kings 19:1-9 that you can identify with? Why?
4. If you were counselling someone who is burned out or contemplating suicide, what would you say to them?
5. What patterns in your life would you say are currently either unsustainable or not life-giving?
6. What changes do you need to you make to start living in a way today that will help you thrive tomorrow?

## **Moving Forward**

Take this simple burnout quiz [here](#). This is NOT a medical test. If you're showing signs of burnout, please see a doctor and a trained Christian counselor.

Regardless of your current state, it's critical to craft a new normal that will help you thrive.

Decide on at least one change you can make in your life this week that will help you live in a way today that will help you thrive tomorrow. Once you've had success with that, continue making changes until you find yourself in a sustainable space of thriving!

## **Changing Your Mind**

So he got up and ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to travel forty days and forty nights to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God. 1 Kings 19:8 NLT

# NOTES



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No one starts out in their early 20s hoping to feel empty, jaded, cynical or burned out by the time they're 35, but it happens all the time. And ask people who are in the middle of it how it happened, and they'll tell you they just didn't see it coming. Maybe the question is can you see it coming? Fortunately, you can. In this series, we'll show you how to spot the challenges you'll face before they impact you, and how to recover from them when they hit you.



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