

Mind

Creatively Redemptive

Psalm 147:12-20 | Session 8.01

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session.
- Read through all of [Psalm 147](#)

Context

Begin by ensuring that everyone is in a comfortable position, then tell the group that you are going to be silent for three minutes (you can choose a longer or shorter time if you choose). During those three minutes, they should be still and try to notice what is going on around them. Encourage them to pay attention to the sounds, sights, feelings, and other things that may be going on in their environment, but not to talk. It might be helpful to have someone set a timer on their watch or phone to let everyone know when the time is finished. When time is up, ask questions like:

- What things did you notice – what did you notice around you, and what did you notice inside you?
- What, if anything, most surprised you?

- What made you the most or least comfortable about participating in this activity and why?
- Why do you think it's important for us to experience stillness from time to time?
- Think back on the things you noticed – how can you see evidence that God is present today?

Content

Read [Psalm 147:12–20](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- Some of the psalms celebrate specific things God has done in the past, or anticipate things that God will do in the future. Where do you think this psalm focuses?
- What specific things does the psalmist see God doing?
- In what ways is God active?
- In what ways do humans respond, or in what ways does the psalmist call us to respond?
- In the psalmist's view, God didn't just set nature in motion and let it run – God is active in sustaining and renewing creation all the time. In what ways have you experienced this?
- In what ways are we, as 21st-century Christ followers, a part of God's ongoing activity?

Closure

Remind the group of the seasonal focus by saying something like:

“We’ve just come out of a season – Advent – in which we were looking back at what God has done (the first coming of Christ) and are looking forward to what God will do

(the final coming of Christ and God setting things right). We're now just days away from the day that millions of Christians celebrate as the revealing (or Epiphany) of Jesus' presence with us."

Ask questions like these:

- Why might it be important at this time to be reminded that God is actively working around us?
- In what ways have you noticed God working in your life or in the world around you lately?
- What helps us recognize when God is at work?
- If God is constantly working around us in the world, what things might we do to support and be a part of that work?
- How might our actions hinder that work, and what can we do to prevent that?
- In what ways might we incorporate more times of "noticing" in our lives, and how might we benefit from such an intentional practice?

Close with prayer, asking God to help you notice the things God is doing all around you today, and the courage to join in and be a part.

Writer: Jon Parks

Current

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Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Have any selected video or music clips ready to show.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Share with the group the [article](#) about the new 3D printed sneakers and ask:

- What is the best use of recycled materials that you have seen?
- What have you purchased that was made from recycled materials?
- What obstacles do the makers of the sneakers have to overcome?

Continue by sharing the [Re:Loom web site](#) with the group and ask questions like:

- How do you feel about this story of recycling and why?
- What kinds of obstacles do you foresee in this particular venture and how do you think they might be overcome?

Content

Read [Psalm 147:12-20](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- What creative activity do you hear in this psalm?
- Nikki says that God “redeems us creatively.” What do you think that means?
- When you think about the ways we pray for God to work in our world, are these the things we expect to happen?
- In what ways do we look for God to strengthen, grant peace, send, give, hurl, or declare?
- In what ways does God’s redemption work like the people who make new things out of the material that others have discarded?

Closure

Share the story of [Barefoot College](#) and ask questions like:

- When you think about the ways we hope God will restore and redeem places in our communities, at what point do you think about barefoot solutions?
- What kind of barefoot solutions have you personally experienced and what did you learn from that experience?
- What lessons might be there for the body of Christ in the way people worked together to accomplish the things described here?
- At what points do you see God creating, and redeeming creatively, in your own community, and how might you join in?

Pray together to end the session.

Writer: Erin Robinson Hall

Mystic

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Before the Session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)
- Have the lyrics for "Look at the World" printed on a poster or handout for people (words are printed below the youtube clip under the "show more" section).
- Have paper and pens available for people to use.

Reflections

Say: "Our first reflection is taken from the last scene of Thornton Wilder's play "Our Town." The main character, Emily, has died and her monologue speaks of the beauty of life. Death is often a good frame for helping us to notice God's graces and gifts around us, if we pay attention. As you watch the scene, what particulars of your own life come to mind that you have now to notice and enjoy. Jot these things down."

"Emily Webb's goodbye" from the Thornton Wilder's play ["Our Town"](#)

After the clip is played, invite people to finish their lists of the particulars in their own lives and spend a few moments with God reflecting on their lists in silent prayer. Give them about 5 minutes to do so.

Say: “Our second reflection is on the song “Look at the World” by John Rutter. As the music plays, you may read the lyrics. After the song plays, jot down any thoughts that came to your mind as you listened. What struck you most about what you heard and saw on the clip?”

[“Look at the World”](#) by John Rutter, sung by the Cambridge Singers.

After the clip is played, give people about 5 minutes to jot down their thoughts and share them with God in silence if they wish to do so.

Say, “Our third reflection is on the text for today. As you listen to it, and view the video, consider how God might be working in your life, and in our world to create anew and redeem. After the text and video are read/played, jot down your thoughts and then share them with God in silence.”

Content & Closure

Read [Psalm 147:12–20](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

After the text is read and the video is played, give people about 5–10 minutes to jot down their thoughts and share them with God in silence.

Invite people to share the insight/reflection that is foremost in their minds.

Close with prayer.

Writer: Joy Yee

Media

Creatively Redemptive

Psalm 147:12-20 | Session 8.01

Before the Session

- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Read through all of [Psalm 147](#) and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Play the [YouTube 2015 in Review Video](#) and ask:

- With the understanding that this is YouTube's look at the last year, which involves a lot of popular culture that might be unfamiliar, what, if anything, in this video stood out to you and why?
- What things do you remember most from last year and why?
- What kinds of things make you feel like your life is passing by you like a blur?"
- How is it possible to focus on specific events when life is so complicated these days?
- What steps can we take to have proper focus this year?
- What are ways, based on how God has blessed us, we can remain with proper focus?"

Content

Read [Psalm 147:12-20](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- What do you typically think when you read or sing the words “Praise the Lord”?
- What does it really mean, in your view, to praise the Lord and why should we do it?
- How do you think the writer of this Psalm felt about it and why?
- Why do think the Psalm ends with images of “word”, “commands”, and “law” before proclaiming “Praise the Lord?”
- In what ways might we miss the point of God’s guidance in all the excitement/discouragement of our life?

Closure

Show the [Mindy Kaling Superbowl Commercial](#) and ask:

- When have you felt as if you were invisible, and how did you react to that?
- What people in your community tend to be the most “invisible” and why?
- What might God show us if we really looked at our neighborhood “invisible?”
- To what degree do you think that praying and praising the Lord feels the call to help the unfortunate or see the world more as God sees it and why?
- As we celebrate the “Epiphany” of God’s revealing Jesus to us, how might we help others have an epiphany by reveling those people and causes that they cannot or will not see?

Close in prayer...

Writer: Jon Self

Youth

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Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Listen to the FaithElement podcast for this session
- Use the social media prompts on this session's webpage to help youth begin engaging the session them ahead of their gathering.
- Make available materials to use in a brainstorming session (paper, pencils, whiteboard, etc.)

Intro

Play the [selective attention test video](#) and ask:

- How much do you think you are really aware of what is going on in the world around you and why?
- What is the most embarrassing thing that has escaped your attention lately?
- When have you tried to get someone else to notice something, only to have them miss it completely?
- What do you suspect to be the most important things going on these days that you're just not able to pick up on and why?

Context

Play the [“Brain Games” video](#) and ask:

- Be honest: how many of the changes that were made in this video did you notice before they revealed them?
- Why is it so easy for people to distract us and make us think we’re seeing what they want us to think we see?
- What are some things that you think others are trying to make you see, whether they are real or not?
- In what ways can you see God at work in the world?
- How can you notice what God is doing, when there is so much going on all the time?

Content

Read [Psalm 147:12–20](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask your group:

- What characteristics of God are displayed in this psalm?
- Why might people think that God has already created everything and there is no need to create more?
- In what ways do these verses show that God is always creating?
- Why do you think that the video says that God’s creative work and God’s redemptive work are one and the same?
- How have you personally seen God’s creative work lead to redemption?

Closure

Hold a brainstorm session with the group, looking at some ways that God might be working in your community and how to get involved in them. Try to think outside

the box and away from the obvious ways God is working that everyone already knows about by asking questions like:

- What kinds of things in this community do you think may make God sad and why?
- What is going on that bothers you, but no one else seems to want to do anything about it?
- What ministries or other helping activities are going on, but struggling because no one seems to be involved?
- What kinds of things might need doing, but are too scary or repulsive for anyone to want to get involved with them?
- Who do you think are the most forgotten people in our area and why?

Have a discussion with your group about ways your group can join in where God is already at work, then work to make a plan to serve your community in this way.

Close this session in prayer.

Writer: Don Breeden

Mix

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Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context (From the Media Session Page)

Play the [YouTube 2015 in Review Video](#) and ask:

- With the understanding that this is YouTube's look at the last year, which involves a lot of popular culture that might be unfamiliar, what, if anything, in this video stood out to you and why?
- What things do you remember most from last year and why?
- What kinds of things make you feel like your life is passing by you like a blur?"
- How is it possible to focus on specific events when life is so complicated these days?
- What steps can we take to have proper focus this year?
- What are ways, based on how God has blessed us, we can remain with proper focus?"

Content (From the Current Session Page)

Read [Psalm 147:12-20](#), then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- What creative activity do you hear in this psalm?
- Nikki says that God “redeems us creatively.” What do you think that means?
- When you think about the ways we pray for God to work in our world, are these the things we expect to happen?
- In what ways do we look for God to strengthen, grant peace, send, give, hurl, or declare?
- In what ways does God’s redemption work like the people who make new things out of the material that others have discarded?

Closure (from the Youth Session page)

Hold a brainstorm session with the group, looking at some ways that God might be working in your community and how to get involved in them. Try to think outside the box and away from the obvious ways God is working that everyone already knows about by asking questions like:

- What kinds of things in this community do you think may make God sad and why?
- What is going on that bothers you, but no one else seems to want to do anything about it?
- What ministries or other helping activities are going on, but struggling because no one seems to be involved?
- What kinds of things might need doing, but are too scary or repulsive for anyone to want to get involved with them?
- Who do you think are the most forgotten people in our area and why?

Have a discussion with your group about ways your group can join in where God is already at work, then work to make a plan to serve your community in this way.

Close this session in prayer.