



PART 1: THE BETTER QUESTION

INTRODUCTION

This is that time of year when we become painfully aware of where we are not, who we are not, and what we need to do differently. Traditionally, the New Year is a season of self-absorption. It's all about what we can do to make ourselves better people. The result is that churches, health clubs, debt counsellors, and vitamin shops do a booming business.

But we tend to forget that the people we respect the most didn't devote their lives to becoming the best versions of themselves. They devoted their lives to making a difference in the world . . . or in someone's world.

RECAP: What one thing from Sunday's message stood out for you?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Did you make a New Year's resolution? If so, what motivated you to make it?
2. Talk about one of your heroes—either someone from history or someone you knew personally. What qualities did that person have that made you look up to him or her?
3. During the message, Phil said, "Jesus taught that devotion to God is measured in terms of our devotion to others." Respond to that statement. In what ways does it challenge your assumptions about faith?
4. Read Nehemiah 1:1–11. Do you believe that God stirs human hearts to pursue divine purposes? If so, do you believe God might stir your heart? Why or why not?
5. What are some things that prevent you from moving from just feeling compassion for others to acting compassionately on others' behalf?
6. What is one thing you can do this week to begin to identify what breaks your heart? What can this group do to help and support you?

MOVING FORWARD

What breaks your heart? What needs to be done around you? If you really want to become a better person, do something to make the world a better place. Be a means to an end.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven. Then I said . . . O Lord, please hear my prayer! Listen to the prayers of those of us who delight in honouring you. . . Nehemiah 1:4 & 11a

IDEAS FOR YOUR EVENING

Worship or Prayer (GBC Website 'Resources Tab')

Other texts: Matt 25: 31-46 (God interprets our love for others as an expression of our love for him)

Music/Video- 'Break our Hearts with the things that break yours' Vicky Beeching. YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zGQL-O9aew>

Exercise: Passion Assessment (GBC Website- 'resources' tab)