

Beyond the Book

TALK IT OVER

Life Beneath the Surface

Speaker Rick Villodas, Pastor of New Life Community Church

Author of "The Narrow Path"

July 6-7, 2024

If you would like to watch the weekend message, visit www.saddleback.com/watch.

Open your group in prayer and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the provided questions, or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions toward the end of the document.

Scriptures Used

Psalm 139:1-3 (ESV), 7-8 (ESV), 13-14 (NASB 1995), 23-24 (NIV)

Questions:

1. As the speaker, Rick Villodas, told the story of how his family responded to the message regarding Ezekiel's prophecy about the dry bones, were you reminded of any moment during your spiritual journey that may have seemed insignificant at the time? Share that experience with the group.
2. Why do we find it so difficult to reveal our innermost thoughts and emotions to God? What process can we use to identify, and give God access to, those thoughts and emotions? What is potentially lost in our relationship with God and others when we don't take time to look beneath the surface of our lives or connect with reality?
3. Two ways to live beneath the surface are to slow down to be with God—to live in the words of Jesus—and to take time to listen to our interior world. What tools do you use to accomplish these methods of living beneath the surface? There are also two temptations Christians face on a regular basis: Using religion to run from God or using God to run from ourselves. Are either of these temptations one with which you are struggling? Why or why not?
4. Jesus, fully man and fully God, experienced every emotion we have. He is intimately acquainted with our joys and our heartaches. What comfort do you find in knowing Jesus understands our pain? How does that help us to empathize with emotions, like grief or anger, felt by those we love?
5. The speaker stated that if we don't tend to our emotional state, we can expect repercussions—a 'BOOM' coming to our lives. Have you ever experienced a 'BOOM' from not dealing with something that's happening beneath the surface? What do you need to do to prevent those 'BOOMS'?

6. The speaker implied that our lives can be chaotic, perhaps referring to activities that can destroy opportunities for an abiding relationship. In Psalm 139, David realizes that God truly knows him and asks God to reveal what he sees. In knowing God's infinite and unconditional love for us, how can we be courageous in asking God to reveal our brokenness and begin to restore order?
7. The two things that happen when we explore our interior world and look beneath the surface are that we live in reality, and we connect with others from a deeper place. How can both of these bring spiritual, emotional, and physical benefit to your walk with Jesus? How can we better serve others when we come to a greater self-awareness? How can self-awareness lead to supportive relationships in our church and families?

Three Essential Questions

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they felt and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message.

1. **What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
2. **What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
3. **What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you've learned today?*

Small Group Action Steps

1. Consider taking the Group Health Assessment in your small group to see how your small group is balancing the five purposes and to get suggested next steps for each purpose: <https://saddleback.com/connect/smallgroups#spiritualCheckup>
2. Did you know that Saddleback produces many new small group studies each year? Visit <https://saddleback.com/studies> to see Saddleback's ever-growing library of small group curricula.

Are you interested in the Bible and in helping small groups benefit from the weekend message? Well, you are in luck! Saddleback members like you create these discussion guides each week. If you are interested in joining the team, please email Maturity@saddleback.com