

ENCOUNTERS: IN EACH OTHER

I. CHECK-IN

- Check in. How is everyone doing? Use this time to sign your small group covenant from last week if you need to.

V. PRAYER REQUESTS

Spend some time sharing prayer requests with each other. As the small group leader, we ask that you do two things:

1. write them down
2. ask someone to pray

II. SCRIPTURE: VERSES FROM ACTS 15

Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders.

The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter.

The whole assembly kept silence and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the gentiles.

Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among them and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers, with the following letter:

“The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers and sisters of gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds, we have decided unanimously to choose men and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

IV. ACTIVITY

Share with a partner (or with your entire group) about a time that you have experienced God’s presence. Make sure you practice active listening skills when it’s not your turn!

III. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stands out to you in the scripture?
- Where does God appear in this reading?
- “It is not intellectual knowledge about God that quenches man’s ancient heart-thirst, but the very Person and Presence of God Himself.” -AW Tozer
 - What quenches your heart-thirst?
- John Wesley commented that people in his “class meetings” (small groups) were there to watch over one another in love.
 - How can your small group do the same?

See the next page for additional questions, figures, and scriptures.

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ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

Listening includes verbal and non-verbal cues. Can you improve your skills?

VERBAL & NON-VERBAL CUES

FACE THE PERSON

Smiles, nods, and eye contact go a long way to let the speaker know you are listening.



CHECK YOUR POSTURE

Lean in slightly to the person tilting your body and head towards them.

AVOID DISTRACTIONS

No fidgeting, checking your phone or watch, or multi-tasking. If necessary, ask the speaker to wait until you are not distracted to talk.



ENGAGE

Occasional positive reinforcement, asking questions or clarification, and remembering key points show your attention.

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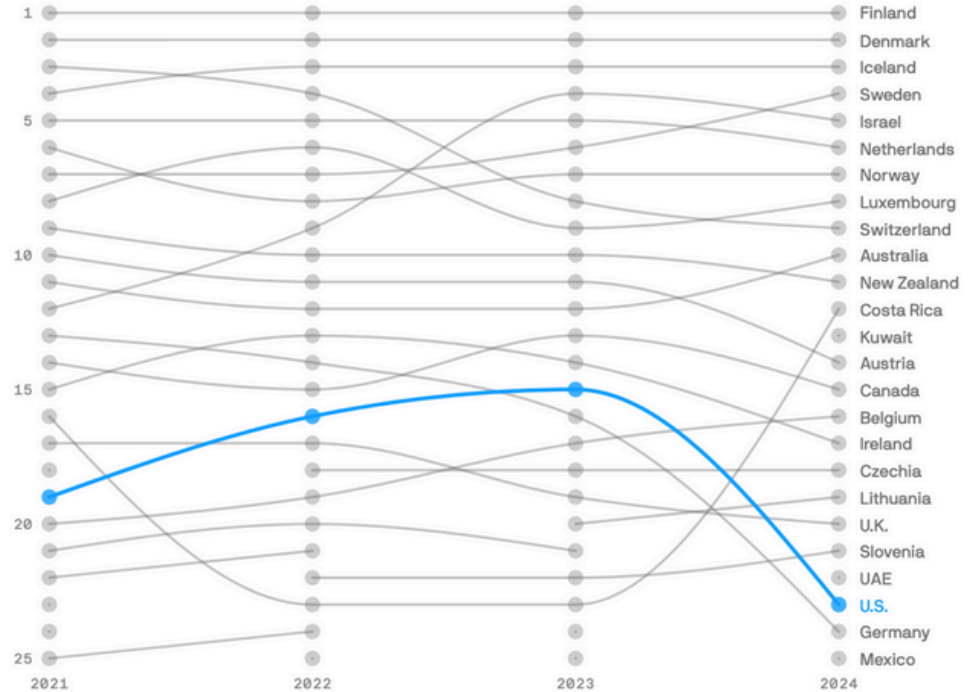


What do you think about the chart below? Are you surprised by the standing of the United States? What makes you unhappy?



World Happiness country rankings, 2021-2024

By average life evaluation score, from survey of about 1,000 adults per country conducted annually



Data: World Happiness Report; Chart: Jacque Schrag / Axios

How can we practice active listening in our small group? What other areas of our lives might this skill be useful?



BONUS SCRIPTURES

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

-Galatians 5:22-23

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

-Matthew 18:20

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?"

-1 Corinthians 3:16