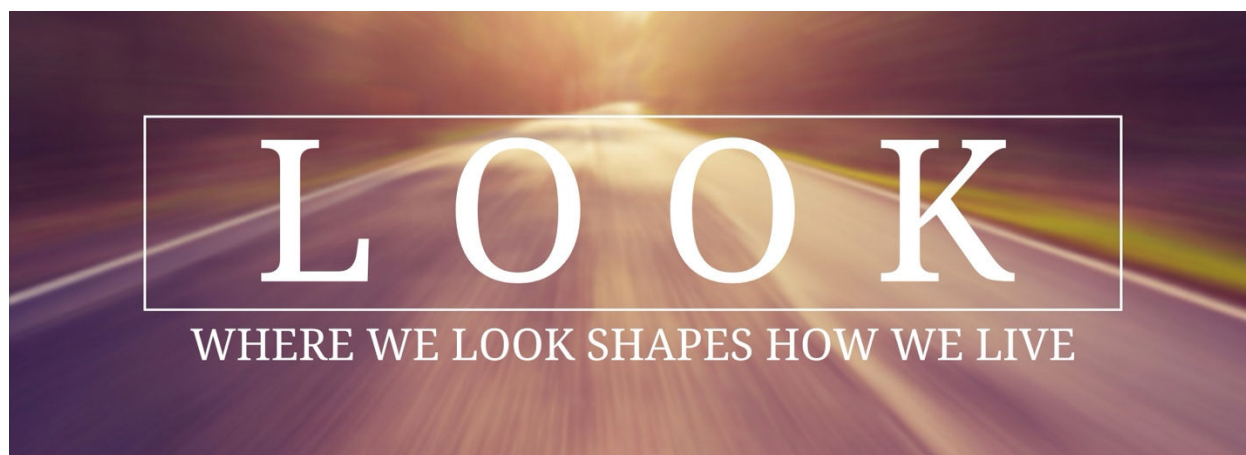




Growth Group Questions
September 6, 2026
“Look Beyond the Noise”

SCRIPTURE AND QUOTES

Nehemiah 6:1-9

¹When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it—though up to that time I had not set the doors in the gates—² Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: “Come, let us meet together in one of the villages^[a] on the plain of Ono.” But they were scheming to harm me; ³ so I sent messengers to them with this reply: “I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?” ⁴ Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer.

⁵ Then, the fifth time, Sanballat sent his aide to me with the same message, and in his hand was an unsealed letter ⁶ in which was written: “It is reported among the nations—and Geshem^[b] says it is true—that you and the Jews are plotting to revolt, and therefore you are building the wall. Moreover, according to these reports you are about to become their king ⁷ and have even appointed prophets to make this proclamation about you in Jerusalem: ‘There is a king in Judah!’ Now this report will get back to the king; so come, let us meet together.”

⁸ I sent him this reply: “Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head.” ⁹ They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed.” But I prayed, “Now strengthen my hands.”

Eugene Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction*

“In order to pray I have to be paying more attention to God than to what people are saying to me; to God than to my clamoring ego.”

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

⁹ Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. ¹⁰ And in fact, you do love all of God’s family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, ¹¹ and to make it your

ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, ¹² so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

Psalm 90:12

¹² Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Psalm 90:17

¹⁷ May the favor^[a] of the Lord our God rest on us;
establish the work of our hands for us—
yes, establish the work of our hands.

QUESTIONS

1. Pastor Paul began his sermon by saying that everything that is demanding is not deserving. What kinds of things do you find to be demanding but not deserving in your life right now?
2. How do you decide what is a priority for your attention and when you can or should say “no” to something or someone?
3. Pastor Paul said it would be great if we could all just “drift into discernment,” but that’s not how it works. What is discernment and why do we need it?
4. What can we do to develop or increase our discernment when it comes to deciding what is important for us to do?
5. In Psalm 90:12, Moses prays for the Lord to “teach us to number our days. . . .” What does that mean to you?
6. How does the ability to “number our days” help us to “gain a heart of wisdom”? (Psalm 90:12)
7. Paraphrase Psalm 90:12 so that it reflects what you would like to ask God to do for you.
8. What does it mean to you for God to “establish the work of our hands”? (Psalm 90:17)

PASTOR PAUL’S SERMON QUESTIONS

1. What is the “great work” God has given you to do right now?
2. Is there something demanding my attention that may not deserve it and what can I do this week to stay focused on God?