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THE TAXIDERMY

Authenticity Over Appearance

Small Group Discussion Guide

Series: *The Trophy: Chasing What Matters, Catching What Lasts*

Big Idea

God rejects the "taxidermy" of religious posturing and demands a living heart; true worship is found when we stop polishing our external shells and start offering our internal selves as broken, breathing, and responsive sacrifices.

Key Verse

Romans 12:1 – "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Discussion Questions

1. The Mounted Trophy: Religious Shells vs. Spiritual Life

- Read 2 Timothy 3:5 and Matthew 23:27. What are the warning signs that someone might have a "form of godliness" but no real spiritual power?
- The sermon described "taxidermy Christians" as static, silent, and controlled. Which of these characteristics do you find most convicting, and why?
- For believers: In what areas of your spiritual life have you become "settled" or are just going through the motions? What would it look like to move from routine to a genuine relationship?



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2. The Divine Inspection: God's Scales vs. Our Sight

- Read Proverbs 21:2 and 1 Samuel 16:7. What's the difference between how we measure ourselves and how God measures us?
- The sermon mentioned that what is "highly esteemed among men" can be an "abomination" to God. Can you think of examples of religious activities that might look impressive but lack spiritual weight?
- How does comparison with others keep us from honestly evaluating our hearts before God? What would change if we truly believed God weighs our hearts when no one is watching?

3. The Heart Exchange: From Stone to Flesh

- Read Ezekiel 36:26 and Romans 12:1. What's the difference between God "repairing" our hearts and "replacing" them?
- What does it mean practically to present yourself as a "living sacrifice"? Why does Paul call this our "reasonable service"?
- The sermon said, "Only a heart that is alive can feel both pain and warmth." Why do we sometimes choose the numbness of a "stone heart" over the vulnerability of a "heart of flesh"?

"In God's economy, the only trophy worth having is the one that stopped trying to look alive and finally let Him make it so."



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