

The Danger of Normal: Romans 12:1-2

HOUSE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE — IN (LOOKING BACK) • UP (LOOKING UP) • OUT (LOOKING FORWARD)

Before You Meet: “Normal” is another word for conformity. We drift into the world’s patterns without choosing them, but Paul calls us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds — under Nero, he pointed Christians to another kingdom.

UP (Gospel) is one third of the night. Give real time to IN and OUT too.

1

IN — Looking Back *(Community)*

Care • Worship • Celebrate Faithfulness • Motivation & Encouragement

Care. Check in — highs, lows, and needs for prayer or practical help.

Worship. Praise together: a song, silence, or naming one thing you’re thankful for.

Celebrate Faithfulness. Follow up on last week’s step and celebrate it out loud.

Motivation & Encouragement. Encourage someone by name for growth you’ve seen.

2

UP — Looking Up *(Gospel — Sermon Discussion Guide)*

Reword or skip questions as needed. Pray first and aim for genuine conversation.

Key Takeaways

1. **Normal is dangerous.** We drift toward conformity, not transformation; renewal takes deliberate surrender.
2. **Name the water.** Striving, hurry, performance, anxiety, and self-promotion shape us unnoticed.
3. **The kingdom pattern.** Receive, don’t strive. Trust, don’t control. Be present, not hurried.
4. **Sabbath is a gift.** Rest is worship and trust in God’s provision, not a checklist.
5. **Refuse to be normal.** Collaborating, not consuming, is the church’s greatest witness.

Opening (Choose One)

- When has someone pointed out a habit you’d stopped noticing?
- Where in daily life do you run on autopilot?

Read Romans 12:1-2. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Digging In

1. “Normal” means conformity. Where have you drifted into the world’s patterns without choosing to?
2. Which pattern grips you most — striving, hurry, performance, anxiety, or self-promotion? What does it reveal about what you believe about God?
3. Renewing the mind is ongoing. Which habits currently shape your thinking, and do they form you toward the kingdom or the world?
4. Consuming or collaborating: how does your relationship with your local church show it? What needs to change?
5. God rested to acknowledge his provision, not from exhaustion. What does your rest (or lack of it) reveal about who you think is in control?

Going Deeper

6. Early Christians called it “the Way,” a whole-life orientation. Where (work, relationships, finances) has the kingdom pattern not yet taken hold?
7. The church’s greatest witness may be refusing the world’s pattern. What would make our church visibly different in rhythms and values?
8. Sabbath is a gift and worship, not a rule. How does seeing rest as trust change how you approach it?
9. Paul wrote to Christians under Nero about another kingdom. How does that change how you face today’s pressures, fears, and demands?

Closing Reflection

10. The sermon ends with people who know they are loved before they accomplish anything. How deeply do you believe this, and how would daily life look different living from that identity rather than toward it?

3

OUT — Looking Forward *(Mission)*

Preparing for the Mission · Going on Mission · Praying for the Mission

Preparing for the Mission

- **Name your water.** Journal on which pattern of the age you're swimming in. Bring one observation to share.
- **Practice a mini Sabbath.** Pause longer before one meal and thank God for one provision you've taken for granted.

Going on Mission

- **Choose one area.** Pick one area (work, parenting, finances, social media) and take one step toward the kingdom pattern.
- **Be noticeably different.** Practice one unhurried, generous rhythm this week that a neighbor or coworker would notice, and invite them in.

Praying for the Mission

Share the pattern you're most susceptible to with a partner for check-in. Then pray together that God would reveal where you're still holding your own will, and for someone you're praying will know Jesus.

Closing

The most radical thing the church can do is refuse to become normal. Pray for surrendered minds, transformed by the good news of a King and a kingdom greater than this age.