

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, September 5th, 2010

Passage: Colossians 2:20-23

Memory Passage: Col. 2:23

TODAY: From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Col. 2:20-23.** How does v. 20 connect with the rest of chapter 2 (notice words & phrases like: “with Christ you died,” “elemental spirits of the world” & “regulations”)?
- (b) What are the Colossians doing to cause Paul to question whether or not they are still “alive to the world?” What does it mean to be “alive to the world?”
- (c) What are the “regulations” to which Paul says they (and we) should not be submitted? Why is submitting to these regulations such a bad thing?
- (d) *Family:* **Read Col. 2:16-19.** Lead your family in a discussion about what they learned last week about legalism (vs. 16-17) and angel worship & false humility (vs. 18-19). One way to do this is to recall the daily object lessons from last week to see what they remember about what you learned. Be ready to re-enforce the ideas that they may not remember.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Colossians 2:10-23.** “Do not handle, Do not taste, do not touch” seem to be phrases that Paul is quoting from the teaching of the Colossians false teachers (notice the quotation marks around v. 21)? What types of things are they requiring?
- (b) Does this warning apply to us today? What types of teaching are being promoted by Christians today that forbid handling, tasting or touching good gifts that God has given believers (list all you can think of)?
- (c) Make a list of every command given in Scripture (that you can think of) that would require us to not handle, not taste or not touch a certain thing. How many of these activities/actions/items are found on the list you made in question (b)? If there is anything that made both of your lists, from which list should it be removed? What should be the defining criteria by which an activity is placed on the first list but not the second (hint: see v. 22).
- (d) *Family:* Pass around an object (it doesn’t matter what it is. A piece of fruit, a rock, a marble, etc.) and after everyone has “touched” and “handled” it, say, “Now everyone is guilty of sinning!” When they ask “Why?” tell them they are guilty because they handled & touched the object. Let them disagree, but you play your part, acting as if you believe touching & handling the object makes them guilty. By your objections to them, force them to come up with reasons why what you are saying can’t be true (“the bible doesn’t teach that” or “where does it teach that in the Bible” etc.). After this discussion, **read Col. 2:20-23** and teach that the false teachers taught that staying away from certain activities made people more righteous, but Paul said that since they died to the world with Christ and have been saved, they need nothing more to be righteous.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read 1 Cor. 6:12-13.** What are the principles concerning our freedom in Christ that Paul teaches in these verses? What bearing do these lessons have on our study of Colossians 2:20-23? How are these passages different? The same?
- (b) Write down as many things as you can think of that are gifts from God, but which at the same time can be “not helpful,” “enslaving” or against what God’s purposes are for our body? What is the key ingredient to understanding when a gift from God becomes enslaving or sinful (in other words, how can you tell when you begin to abuse a good gift?)
- (c) What areas of your life require you to be a “watchman on the wall” of your own heart in order to not be taken captive by a good gift from God? In what ways are you actively crucifying your flesh in these areas? Are these areas in which you need to seek wisdom from another believer in order to be more faithful in this area? Write down the name of someone you will talk to (and when you will contact them!) about how to be more faithful in not becoming enslaved to these good gifts from God.
- (d) *Family:* Read 1 Cor. 6:12. Ask everyone to draw a picture of his or her favorite food or activity. After they finish drawing, ask each person to tell their drawing and why they choose this food/activity. When everyone has finished, ask if they would like to do/eat their choice every minute of every day. Then ask how often they would need to do/eat their choice before they would be enslaved to it, and how they would know if they had been enslaved. Teach them the difference between the activity/food itself and the desires for the activity/food, and how quickly our desires can be for things rather than Christ.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Mark 7:14-23.** Summarize this teaching of Jesus in one sentence (Make sure to write down your summary!).

(b) What relevance does this teaching have for our study of Colossians 2:10-13? Why is it important for us to understand that sin originates within us, not outside of us?

(c) **Reread Col. 2:20-23.** Why does Paul mention that these things “all perish as they are used?” What contrast is he making?

(d) Are you one who is caught up in a set of rules and believes that keeping these rules is required for someone to be a “real” Christian? Do you look down upon and make judgments upon others who do not obey the rules in the same way that you do? If so, take a moment to ask God to free you of this kind of false humility, repenting of your sin of trusting in these rules and rituals rather than Christ.

(e) *Family:* In preparation for today prepare several servings of food that is not what it seems (it might also be helpful to answer the questions for Day 6 prior to leading this lesson). You can do this in several ways, depending on what you have on hand. Take a piece of fruit or a Twinkie-like pastry and inject it with ink or food coloring; make fake cupcakes by filling a muffin tin with cupcake papers, filling each paper approx. ½ full with dirt, and then covering the top with whipped cream (I think you get the idea). After making a big deal about how good your dessert looks and whetting everyone’s appetite, ask, “Who would like some dessert?” Everyone should say “yes!” and then you should give everyone a serving of your “dessert.” When everyone complains, ask, “What is the matter?” Get them to make the point that the dessert was not what it seemed to be by its outward appearance. Then read Col. 2:20-23 and teach about legalistic practices of false humility that give the outward appearance of wisdom but are actually no help in stopping us from sinning or making us acceptable to God.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read James 1:13-18.** According to these verses, who is at fault when we sin? Who are we most definitely not to blame? Explain the process that leads to sin according to these verses. Is being tempted a sin? Why or why not?

(b) These verses give us an idea of how we should combat temptation in our life. How would you describe this battle to a new believer? How do you fight temptation in your own life? (Hint: read vs. 14-15 again, focusing on “desire.”)

(c) How does James 1:17 relate to 1:13-17 & Colossians 2:20-23?

(d) *Family:* In preparation for today, prepare the same “dessert” as last night, but this time don’t make the inside rotten. Everyone will probably not want your dessert tonight, so use their objections to reinforce what you taught last night from Col. 2:23. Pass out the dessert and let everyone eat while you **read Mark 7:14-23**. Use the object lesson from last night (the dessert with the rotten center) to teach the truth that sin originates in our sinful hearts, not from outside activities (for instance, “what caused the rottenness of the dessert, something on the outside or on the inside?” or “Would it have mattered what the Twinkie did or where it was? Would it still have been rotten? Why (because it was rotten on the inside)?”

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

(a) **Read Col. 2:20-23.** In v. 23 Paul says that when people follow these man-made rules they may give the appearance of wisdom. How might these kinds of legalists appear wise?

(b) Paul also says that these activities “are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.” Why is this so? Why do we need to stop the indulgence of the flesh? If these are no value, what *is* of value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh (you should be able to fully answer this question after your study this week!)?

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