

Growth Group Homework

For the week of May 5, 2013

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. Rachel and Leah were involved in some major sibling rivalry which was compounded by the fact they were both married to the same guy. What level of sibling rivalry did you experience in your family growing up?

If you are a parent, how are you handling (or did you handle) sibling rivalry with your children?

2. Larry talked about the God-shaped hole in every person's life that only God can fill. Often people are aware of that hole but try to fill it with something besides God. Are there any ways that you have tried to fill this hole in your life apart from God? If so, please explain.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Seventeenth Century French author Blaise Pascal wrote, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus." How do the following passages help you understand what it looks like when that God-shaped vacuum is completely filled by Jesus Christ?

Psalm 92:12-15

John 10:10

Psalm 16:11

1 Peter 2:9-10

What has been your experience with living the kind of life described in these passages?

Can you think of any hurdles that could stand in the way of people experiencing the kind of life described in these passages?

2. The “unmerited” grace Larry mentioned this weekend is talked about throughout the Bible. One of those places is Ephesians 2:4-10. After reading the passage, write down as many examples you can find of God’s grace being displayed and the benefits of receiving that grace.

Can you think of any differences God’s grace has made in your life?

3. God is committed to changing jerks over time so they become more like Jesus. This change process takes effort on both our part (i.e. Bible intake, prayer, gathering with other believers) and God’s to produce the growth. How do the following passages help you better understand these two aspects of growth?

Ephesians 4:22-25

Galatians 5:16-23

Philippians 2:12-13

What do you think could happen to a person who focused only on our part in the growth process? How about someone who focused only on God’s part?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Are there any hurdles in your life that may be hindering you from experiencing the life God intends you to have?

2. Is there anything from this week's sermon or homework for which you'd like prayer?

Prayer Requests:

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Psalm 92:12-15

12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;
13 planted in the house of the Lord,
they will flourish in the courts of our God.
14 They will still bear fruit in old age,
they will stay fresh and green,
15 proclaiming, "The Lord is upright;
he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him." [NIV]

John 10:10

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. [NIV]

Psalm 16:11

11 You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,

with eternal pleasures at your right hand. [NIV]

1 Peter 2:9-10

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. [NIV]

What has been your experience with living the kind of life described in these passages?

Can you think of any hurdles that could stand in the way of people experiencing the kind of life described in these passages?

2. The “unmerited” grace Larry mentioned this weekend is talked about throughout the Bible. One of those places is Ephesians 2:4-10. After reading the passage, write down as many examples you can find of God's grace being displayed and the benefits of receiving that grace.

Ephesians 2:4-10

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. [NIV]

Can you think of any differences God's grace has made in your life?

3. God is committed to changing jerks over time so they become more like Jesus. This change process takes effort on both our part (i.e. Bible intake, prayer, gathering with other believers) and God's to produce the growth. How do the following passages help you better understand these two aspects of growth?

Ephesians 4:22-25

22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. 25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. [NIV]

Galatians 5:16-23

16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. [NIV]

Philippians 2:12-13

Do Everything Without Grumbling

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. [NIV]

What do you think could happen to a person who focused only on our part in the growth process? How about someone who focused only on God's part?

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