

Growth Group Homework

For the week of October 13, 2013

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, *Perspective: Seeing the BIG Picture*, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. What's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the words "spiritual warfare"?

We all have different beliefs about what spiritual warfare means and fall on a spectrum between those who under-spiritualize, over-spiritualize and everything between. Where do you fall on that spectrum?

2. Chris mentioned that many of us will live life with an asterisk by our name, meaning that we call ourselves Christians but don't follow God's rules. What are some of the areas people are tempted to play by their own rules the most? Did any of these catch your attention that you might not have been aware of? If so, explain.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. This past weekend Chris reminded us, "We are in a battle," and "Don't fall for the enemy's schemes." How do the following verses give us insight into how "the enemy" (Satan) attacks and what new understanding does that give about his schemes?

Genesis 3:1-5

The Fall

3 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [NIV]

Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."

10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him. [NIV]

Revelation 12:10

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

"Now have come the salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God,
and the authority of his Messiah.

For the accuser of our brothers and sisters,
who accuses them before our God day and night,
has been hurled down. [NIV]

The enemy will usually attack the areas we're weakest or most vulnerable to fall. Is there a verse above that speaks to an area where you're vulnerable to an attack?

2. In talking about "Athletes," Chris said, "If we play on God's team, we play by God's rules." As simple as that sounds, the Bible gives plenty examples of people getting this concept wrong despite being somewhat knowledgeable about what the Bible says. How do the following verses differentiate between knowing "God's rules" and truly playing on "God's team"?

Mark 7:1-8

That Which Defiles

7 1 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus 2 and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash.

And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

6 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

“These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

7 They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.’

8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”
[NIV]

Romans 2:13

13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. [NIV]

James 1:22-27

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

26 Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. 27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. [NIV]

Which of these verses is most important for you to watch to make sure you’re on God’s team?

3. Chris mentioned the job of a farmer is incredibly hard in that they get almost no return in the short run. It’s no surprise that many people only want to invest in things when there’s an immediate return and personal benefit. How does Matthew 6:19-24 help us determine “Whom are we harvesting for?” and how does it encourage us to plant a harvest that may be years in the making?

Matthew 6:19-24

Treasures in Heaven

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. [NIV]

Can you think of any “moths,” “vermin” or “thieves” that have played a part in destroying your earthly treasures and how has that changed your view of their value?

How do we balance plans for the future, enjoying what we have, and serving the kingdom?

TAKING IT HOME

Looking back on “*Perspective: Seeing the BIG Picture,*” are there any changes you’d like to make to be a stronger player on God’s team during the upcoming week?

Prayer Requests:

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