

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 16, 2014

QUICK REVIEW

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

MY STORY

1. What do you think your friends and family who aren't following Jesus would say about the reputation of the Christians they know?

What do you think has contributed most to their thinking?

2. Chris talked about the battle we're in against sinful desires. Have you ever had someone help you effectively deal with a sin issue in your life? If so, what did they do that was helpful?

Can you think of any ways a person could think they're helping someone deal with a sin issue but instead are not being helpful at all?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. We heard this weekend that we are free to express our opinions when it comes to political matters, but we need to be careful to do so in a way that is respectful and loving. How could the following verses help shape how we communicate with those we disagree with?

Proverbs 12:17-18

Proverbs 15:1

Proverbs 15:14

Proverbs 17:27

Proverbs 18:13

In what ways could the instructions in Matthew 5:43-48 help someone develop a better attitude toward those they differ with politically?

2. Chris talked about abstaining from the sinful desires that are at war with our souls. Abstaining can be challenging because each of us has a sin nature that encourages those desires. And we have an enemy (the devil) who is called the "tempter" whose ultimate goal is to get us to disobey God (see Genesis 3). In the following verses, what do you see that can help us consistently win this battle?

James 4:7-8

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

1 John 1:8-2:2

To prevent ourselves from giving in to our sinful desires, we need to set up safeguards and develop strategies. Can you think of any safeguards or strategies you have seen others use at work, at home, or in their personal or social life to help them avoid temptation? If so, explain.

3. Daniel is a great example of someone who lived his life in such a way that people noticed a difference. He was a foreigner in a land where the society, the government and the ruler were completely opposed to God. As you read part of Daniel's story in Daniel 6:1-5, what stands out to you about the way he lived his life in this kind of hostile environment?

What would be most challenging to you if you found yourself in a situation similar to Daniel's?

Can you think of what it would look like for a person to have influence like Daniel in a workplace, school or home that is closed off to God and his plan?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Looking back on this week's sermon and study, what's most important for you to remember?

2. As you think about how you've engaged in expressing your political opinions, are there attitudes or actions that you want to look at more closely or change?

Prayer Requests:

⇒

⇒

⇒

⇒

⇒

⇒

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 16, 2014

QUICK REVIEW

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

MY STORY

1. What do you think your friends and family who aren't following Jesus would say about the reputation of the Christians they know?

What do you think has contributed most to their thinking?

2. Chris talked about the battle we're in against sinful desires. Have you ever had someone help you effectively deal with a sin issue in your life? If so, what did they do that was helpful?

Can you think of any ways a person could think they're helping someone deal with a sin issue but instead are not being helpful at all?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. We heard this weekend that we are free to express our opinions when it comes to political matters, but we need to be careful to do so in a way that is respectful and loving. How could the following verses help shape how we communicate with those we disagree with?

Proverbs 12:17-18

¹⁷ An honest witness tells the truth,
but a false witness tells lies.

¹⁸ The words of the reckless pierce like swords,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing. *[NIV]*

Proverbs 15:1

¹ A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger. *[NIV]*

Proverbs 15:14

¹⁴ The discerning heart seeks knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly. *[NIV]*

Proverbs 17:27

²⁷ The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint,
and whoever has understanding is even-tempered. *[NIV]*

Proverbs 18:13

¹³ To answer before listening—that is folly and shame. *[NIV]*

In what ways could the instructions in Matthew 5:43-48 help someone develop a better attitude toward those they differ with politically?

Matthew 5:43-48

Love for Enemies

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. *[NIV]*

2. Chris talked about abstaining from the sinful desires that are at war with our souls. Abstaining can be challenging because each of us has a sin nature that encourages those desires. And we have an enemy (the devil) who is called the "tempter" whose ultimate goal is to get us to disobey God (see Genesis 3). In the following verses, what do you see that can help us consistently win this battle?

James 4:7-8

⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. *[NIV]*

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. *[NIV]*

1 John 1:8-2:2

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

¹ My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. *[NIV]*

To prevent ourselves from giving in to our sinful desires, we need to set up safeguards and develop strategies. Can you think of any safeguards or strategies you have seen others use at work, at home, or in their personal or social life to help them avoid temptation? If so, explain.

3. Daniel is a great example of someone who lived his life in such a way that people noticed a difference. He was a foreigner in a land where the society, the government and the ruler were

completely opposed to God. As you read part of Daniel's story in Daniel 6:1-5, what stands out to you about the way he lived his life in this kind of hostile environment?

Daniel 6:1-5

Daniel in the Den of Lions

¹ It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, ² with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. ³ Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴ At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. ⁵ Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God." [NIV]

What would be most challenging to you if you found yourself in a situation similar to Daniel's?

Can you think of what it would look like for a person to have influence like Daniel in a workplace, school or home that is closed off to God and his plan?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Looking back on this week's sermon and study, what's most important for you to remember?

2. As you think about how you've engaged in expressing your political opinions, are there attitudes or actions that you want to look at more closely or change?

Prayer Requests:

⇒

⇒

⇒

⇒

⇒

⇒