

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 15, 2015

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. What is your response to Chris' statement that "it is a daily dying to self that allows God's grace to live in us"? What is most challenging to you about that daily death?

2. Complaining about our circumstances is common and can easily become a habit. What kinds of things do you find people around you complaining about the most?

Can you think of anything you've done to help yourself avoid falling into the habit of complaining?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. We often struggle to view life's problems, challenges, and circumstances from God's point of view, yet it can be a big help in embracing these if we can maintain an eternal perspective. How could the following passages help us keep our eyes on God's perspective?

Matthew 6:19-21

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. [NIV]

Luke 12:13-21

The Parable of the Rich Fool

13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

14 Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" 15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

16 And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. 17 He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

18 "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. 19 And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."

20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

21 "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God." [NIV]

What are some of the challenges people face in maintaining an eternal perspective? Are there any of these you're struggling with?

2. Understanding and remembering God's sovereignty is an important part of dying to self. God's sovereignty means he is in control and nothing happens outside of his influence and authority. What can you learn about God's sovereignty from his words to the Israelites as quoted by Isaiah in Isaiah 46:3-11?

Isaiah 46:3-11

3 "Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob,
all the remnant of the people of Israel,
you whom I have upheld since your birth,
and have carried since you were born.
4 Even to your old age and gray hairs
I am he, I am he who will sustain you.
I have made you and I will carry you;
I will sustain you and I will rescue you.
5 "With whom will you compare me or count me equal?
To whom will you liken me that we may be compared?
6 Some pour out gold from their bags
and weigh out silver on the scales;
they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god,
and they bow down and worship it.
7 They lift it to their shoulders and carry it;
they set it up in its place, and there it stands.
From that spot it cannot move.
Even though someone cries out to it, it cannot answer;
it cannot save them from their troubles.
8 "Remember this, keep it in mind,
take it to heart, you rebels.
9 Remember the former things, those of long ago;
I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me.
10 I make known the end from the beginning,
from ancient times, what is still to come.
I say, 'My purpose will stand,
and I will do all that I please.'
11 From the east I summon a bird of prey;
from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose.
What I have said, that I will bring about;
what I have planned, that I will do [NIV]

Can you think of any examples of how knowing about God's sovereignty has helped you in the midst of a storm?

Trials, challenges, and opposition give us opportunities to trust God's sovereignty and face things with confidence. Is there one of these areas that you are struggling to see God's sovereignty in?

3. We heard this weekend how Paul was willing to die to self and embrace his circumstances as a prisoner. In Philippians 4:10-13 and 2 Corinthians 12:6-10, Paul shares some reasons why he was able to do this. What do you see in these passages that help explain why he was willing to accept the various challenges he faced?

Philippians 4:10-13

Thanks for Their Gifts

10 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength. [NIV]

2 Corinthians 12:6-10

6 Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, 7 or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. [NIV]

What can we learn from Paul about how to be real about the difficulty or frustration of a situation while also viewing life from God's point of view?

How could the principles in Matthew 6:25-27 & 33-34 help us grow in our ability to embrace our current situation?

Matthew 6:25-27

Do Not Worry

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? [NIV]

Matthew 6:33-34

33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. [NIV]

Can you think of any ways we can balance accepting our current situation as from the Lord with the personal responsibility to make any changes that are possible? If so, explain.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Is there a circumstance you're currently facing for which you'd like prayer?

2. Looking back over this week's sermon and homework, what's the most important thing for you to remember?

Prayer Requests:

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