

KNOWING GOD

Theology = Study of God's **Nature** & **Character**

STATE OF THE UNION

2 Timothy 4

Post-**Christian** & Post-**Modern**

THE LANDMINES

- (1) Theology is not defined by how I **feel**.
Jeremiah 17:9
- (2) Theology is not defined through what I **experience**.
Psalms 18 & 73
- (3) Theology is not defined by my changing **circumstances**.
Numbers 23:19
- (4) Theology is not influenced by **culture**.
Hebrews 13:8

THE SOLID GROUND

I am on solid ground when...

- ✓ I drown my **lies** in his truth.
Numbers 23:19
- ✓ I check my beliefs with **Scripture**.
2 Timothy 3:16
- ✓ I don't let **suffering** influence my theology.
Romans 5:3-5
- ✓ I know **why** I believe.
1 Peter 3:15

TAKING IT HOME

*Bad theology will always be **louder** but will never be **truer**.*

Growth Group Homework

For the week of November 27, 2016

Because this is the last meeting of the fall quarter, the homework is shorter than normal. As usual, your final meeting will include a look back on how God has worked this past quarter, communion, and time to complete Feedback Forms. Our winter Growth Group quarter will begin the week of January 15, 2017. Have a great few weeks off celebrating the birth of our Lord! Merry Christmas!

QUICK REVIEW

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

MY STORY

1. The Christmas season brings a number of fun and varied traditions. Take a moment to answer the questions below to check your "Christmas Tradition" IQ.

- * Which reindeer does not belong? *Dancer/ Comet / Roger/ Dasher*
- * Which president was the first to decorate the White House Christmas tree?
Franklin Pierce/ Ben Franklin/ George Washington/ Abraham Lincoln
- * What should children leave out for Santa on Christmas Eve?
Cookies & Milk/ Carrots/ Cheddar Cheese/ Starbucks
- * After red and green, what are the two most popular Christmas colors?
- * What were Frosty's last words?
- * How many wise men were there according to the Bible?
- * What's one of your favorite Christmas Eve & Christmas morning traditions? (Everyone should get this one right.)

2. As you look back on this quarter, what are one or two things about your Growth Group experience that you have appreciated most? (It can be time spent together, how your group has encouraged you to continue to live your life for Christ, something new you learned, a service project, spiritual breakthrough, growth challenge or anything else.)

DIGGING DEEPER

1. This weekend Christopher reminded us that we can be confident that we are standing on solid ground as we follow Jesus. Christmas is a time full of fun traditions, but can distract us from focusing on the true foundation of our faith. How can the following verses keep our focus on what Christmas is all about?

Isaiah 9:6-7 *New International Version (NIV)*

⁶For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

Philippians 2:5-8 *New International Version (NIV)*

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:
⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

John 3:16 *New International Version (NIV)*

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

How does Ephesians 2:11-18 expand our understanding of why Jesus' birth is important and what that means for us today?

Ephesians 2:11-18 *New International Version (NIV)*

Jew and Gentile Reconciled Through Christ

¹¹ Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—
¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

2. The landmines we heard spoken about this weekend can attack our sense of stability and strength, leaving us with a sense of powerlessness and ineffectiveness. Yet, as a follower of Christ, we can be confident that we have been transformed and that God is working. Based on the verses below, what can we be confident of as a result of Jesus' sacrifice and our commitment to follow him?

2 Corinthians 5:17 *New International Version (NIV)*

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Acts 1:8 *New International Version (NIV)*

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Romans 5:1 *New International Version (NIV)*

Peace and Hope

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Romans 8:37-39 *New International Version (NIV)*

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE REASON FOR THE SEASON

As followers of Christ, we are able to celebrate the Christmas season because we can know that our belief of the amazing gift God has given us is on "solid ground" – the gift of his son Jesus, born that we might have life through his death and resurrection! Jesus is always knocking on our door to remind us that he brings us grace and life. Communion is about remembering just that. Your time together this week will conclude by taking Communion and remembering this great gift God has given us through his son Jesus.

To prepare for Communion, read Luke 2:1-7, Luke 22:19-20 & John 15:12-17.

What catches your attention as beneficial to remember as you take Communion in your group?



YOU'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Thanks for all you have done to make a difference in our community this past quarter. Below are a few more great opportunities that you may want to consider for yourself and/or for your Growth Group:

❖ **Christmas Outreach Tree:**

Beginning November 26, stop by the Christmas Outreach Tree on the Vista, Carlsbad, Fallbrook, and San Marcos/Escondido Campuses and choose an ornament. Presents listed on the ornaments include toys, sports equipment, diapers and baby blankets, along with items for parents in need and local homeless shelters. Return the unwrapped present to your campus by December 11 with the ornament and help make a difference.

❖ **Amazing Race to Serve:**

North Coast's version of the popular television series, "The Amazing Race," is happening on February 4, 2017. Our short adventure race is like a scavenger hunt on steroids, taking teams from the Oceanside Pier to the North Coast Church Vista Campus. Proceeds from the event go to support the 2017 Weekend of Service. You can sign up online now at amazingracetoserve.com. **Note: New Family Friendly Course Option & Fundraising Grand Prize!**

❖ **2017 Weekend of Service:**

Mark your calendars! The 2017 Weekend of Service will be on April 29 & 30, 2017. It's a weekend that we cancel church and all 12,000 of us do over \$2.5 million worth of service projects in just 48 hours. More info to come...

As the New Year begins, watch for more opportunities to serve as a Growth Group and make a difference in our community in the name of Jesus.

