

Connecting Group Study Guide

Knowing, Growing, Going

Week of July 3-9, 2016

Follow-up

1. Start by checking in with each other about your previous week.
2. Did your group decide on a service project in your neighborhood? If not, take some time to discuss and firm this up together.

This week we looked further at some false gospels and why they are false. We also heard a few more testimonies responding to the question “Why is the gospel good news for you?” Pastor Chris challenged us to embrace discipleship (following Jesus) as a core piece of the gospel message. We will explore this a bit more this week.

Begin by reading together Isaiah 1:18-20.

Knowing God (Encounter)

In this passage God is speaking to his people, Israel, through the prophet Isaiah (“For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” – v. 20). In Isaiah ch. 1 God is calling out Israel for forsaken Him and rebelling against Him. One way this came out in their lives involved oppressing others. God has some harsh words for His people in this chapter.

1. According to the above statements, what does this tell us about the character of God?
2. Read v. 18. What can we glean from this verse about the heart of God?

Growing in Christ-likeness (Sanctification)

1. Read vv. 19-20. What two things are being contrasted in these verses?
2. What is the stated consequence accompanying these two items?
3. What insight about God and His expectations for His people can we glean from these two verses?

Going to Our Neighbors and the World (Obedience)

1. How does this passage from Isaiah tie together with our series “The Whole Gospel”?
2. God forgives us and cleanses us (v. 18) but He also looks for our obedience as His people (vv.19-20). Read the following statement from John N Oswalt:
“On the one hand it ought not be said that obedience produces forgiveness. God forgives and cleanses not because he must, but because he wishes to and has made a way for that to be done through the death and resurrection of Christ. But on the other hand, it is also plain that God does not proclaim forgiveness to those who are unwilling to obey. All the rhetorical language of the prophets, urging people to obey, is in opposition to any position that God’s forgiveness can ever be experienced apart from a disposition to obey him.”
3. Does anything strike you about the above paragraph? How does this point us toward the call to be disciples who make disciples?
4. Read John 14:15 and 15:10. In light of these words from Jesus and the words from God in Isaiah, what is the essence of discipleship and faith?

Action Step: Begin to practice focusing in on two questions:

(1) What is God saying to me?

(2) What am I going to do about it?

As you spend time in the word this week, ask yourself these questions each day. Journal about this experience and be prepared to share about what you heard and what you experienced through your obedience to Christ.

Close in prayer together.