

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, July 18, 2010

Passage: Colossians 1:24-27

Memory Passage: 1 Pet. 4:14 (Adults & Children)

TODAY: From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Col. 1:24-27.** Paul moves in these verses to a description of his own ministry. Why do you think he finds this important to write about at this stage of his letter?

(b) Paul says that he rejoices in his sufferings (v. 24). From what you know of Paul's life, how did Paul suffer (see 2 Cor. 11:23-33 if you need some help)? What other emotions (besides rejoicing) might he have felt during these times? Do you think he was ever tempted to give in to these other emotions and reject rejoicing?

(c) **Read Phil. 4:4.** Think of times in your life during the last week or so in which you gave in to the temptation to do something other than rejoice. How might you better achieve the state of "always rejoicing," even in the face of suffering?

(d) *Family:* Ask everyone to give their own definition of what the word "rejoice" means. As each person defines it, fill in the meaning until everyone understands what it means. Be prepared with a list of fun and exciting activities and have each person act out (without words, only actions and body language) what it looks like to rejoice over each word (i.e. going to Disneyworld, eating ice cream, going swimming, going on vacation, etc.). Now read a list of suffering activities (being made fun of for praying before a meal, not eating lunch when we are hungry because we gave our food to someone else, getting beat up because we told someone that Jesus loved them, etc), and ask them to act out "rejoicing" in response to these things. Be ready to lead a discussion and explain how and why we must rejoice over sufferings just as much as fun things.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Col. 1:24-27.** For whom does Paul suffer according to v. 24? How do you think Paul suffers for the Colossians since he has never ministered to them in person? How does he suffer for the entire church?

(b) **Read Acts 9: 1-16** (especially focus on vs. 5 & 15-16). Who is Paul actually persecuting? What will be Paul's mission? Can you see any connection between Christ suffering when the church is persecuted (Acts 9:5) and Paul suffering for Christ's sake as he preaches (Acts 9:16) and Col. 1:24?

(c) What does Paul mean when he says that he does his share "in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions"? Is there any possibility that he means that Christ's afflictions on the cross were lacking in any way? Why or why not? Can you prove your answer by using only Colossians 1:1-23?

(d) *Family:* Ask everyone to share with each other ways that people suffer (explain what suffering means if not everyone knows). Ask everyone to share things that, if they happened to them, would be suffering (getting hurt in a bike wreck, being sick and not able to go on a trip, etc.) Now read through 2 Cor. 11:23-33 and discuss all of the ways that Paul suffered. Really put some effort into getting your family to envision what it must have been like to go through these types of sufferings. It almost looks like an Indiana Jones movie script! At the end of the discussion, remind them that we should "rejoice" in our sufferings for Christ!

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Col. 1:21-23.** Paul refers to his ministry as being given to him "according to the stewardship from God." What do you think Paul means by this? How do you think it affects his ministry and his approach to it?

(b) How does realizing that you have been given a ministry "according to the stewardship from God" motivate you toward serving God with greater rejoicing?

(c) Paul says that his ministry has been "bestowed on me for your benefit." How do the Colossians benefit from Paul's ministry? How do you benefit from Paul's ministry? How do others benefit from your ministry?

(d) What, according to v. 25, is Paul's ministry? Just like Paul, we are tasked to "fully carry out the preaching of the word of God" (NASB) or "to make the word of God fully known" (ESV) (two ways of translating this verse). How do you fulfill this mandate in your life? In what areas might you grow in this mandate? Be specific in writing down ways that you can increase your ministry of the word.

(e) *Family:* In advance, write the memory verse for this week (1 Pet. 4:14) on note card size pieces of paper, one word to a card. Place the cards on the table in jumbled order and ask: Does this sentence make any sense to you? How might we make it make sense ("by putting it in the correct order!"). Have the group put the cards together in the correct order and all say the

verse aloud together. Teach them that they have just accomplished “making the word of God fully known” (Col. 1:25 ESV) because now it is understandable. In the same way, every time they get the chance to explain any teachings from God’s word to others (friends, family, etc.) they are making the word of God fully known, just like Paul!

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Eph. 3:1-12.** In these verses Paul explains his ministry (stewardship) more fully. You will notice some of the same words as we have seen in Col. 1:25. Of what is Paul a steward? What did Paul have revealed to Him?
- (b) What is the mystery? Was this mystery understood by past generations? To whom has it been revealed? What makes it a mystery? What was Paul’s role in this mystery? For what purpose was this grace given to Paul?
- (c) **Read Col. 1:26-27.** Given what you just learned in Ephesians 3, explain vs. 26-27 in your own words. I know that neither you nor I are Paul, but we are not free from the responsibility of proclaiming this mystery. What is your role in the revelation of this mystery? In what ways do you (or should you) reveal this mystery to those who are blinded from it?
- (d) *Family:* Prior to your worship time choose an odd shaped item that you can place in the middle of the table or the floor and cover with a blanket, towel or sheet (as long as you can’t see through it). Have everyone look at the shape and guess what might be under the blanket. Once all the guesses are made, reveal the object by removing the blanket. Then read Col 1:25-27 and explain the mystery of the gospel to the Gentiles as found in these verses (Studying Eph. 3:1-12 will help you). Make sure you use the illustration of the “mystery” under the blanket (vaguely seen but not understood) to illustrate your point.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Col. 1:27.** According to this verse, what is “the riches of the glory of this mystery?” Why do you think Paul uses this language to describe this mystery and its effects toward the Gentiles?
- (b) Explain how “Christ in you” is “the hope of glory.” What does each phrase mean (i.e. is it Christ in you individually or Christ in you corporately, or both? Consider the context!)?
- (c) How does this phrase (“Christ in you the hope of glory”) affect the way you respond to the sufferings we considered earlier this week? How will the truth of this phrase help you rejoice as you navigate your next season of suffering? How would you bring the truth of this phrase to bear on the life of someone in your life who might be suffering today?
- (d) *Family:* Use the graphic that Kathy has designed for this sermon series to explain the phrase “Christ in you the hope of glory.” This is a great time to present the gospel to your children as you teach this phrase, and the visual of Kathy’s graphic will help you to illustrate the truths. You can find this graphic on the website or the Pastor’s Pals pages.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) This week’s questions seem to be less focused on application than usual, so take today to reread your answers from this week and write down 2 or 3 ways that these truths might impact your walk with Christ this week. Think through what the passage says, what it means, and how the Holy Spirit may use these truths to sanctify you during this week. Finish by praying for a heart that is open to the Spirit’s leading, and full of desire to live obediently to what He reveals, always rejoicing even through suffering.

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The Mystery Revealed!