

DISCUSSION NOTES

OCTOBER 2, 2016

Pray and ask God to teach you, help you trust Him more, and strengthen you to live what you learn.

GETTING STARTED

1. Can you think of a TV/film character with a self-righteous attitude? Who? How was he/she portrayed?

DIGGING IN

2. Read Mark 2:13-17. In verse 13, what is Jesus doing? How common has this activity been for Jesus so far in Mark (see Mark 1:14, 1:21, 1:38, 1:39, 2:2)? Why do you think this was important to Jesus?
3. In verses 14, how does Jesus' call of Levi (Matthew) compare with his call of Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, and John in Mark 1:16-20? What is the same? What is different?
4. In verse 15-16, whose house was Jesus visiting? Who else was there along with Jesus? What were they doing? Why do you think the religious leaders were surprised by this?
5. In verse 17, Jesus uses a common proverb from that time that teaches an obvious and logical truth. But then he adds a sentence that applies it to their spiritual rather than physical lives. How is Jesus statement ironical? Does he mean that some are so righteous they need help? How does Jesus statement challenge the assumptions of the Pharisees?

LIVING IT OUT

6. Read aloud the following quote from Tim Keller (*King's Cross: The Story of the World in the Life of Jesus*, p. 46-7), and then discuss the questions below:

The "traditional values" approach to life is moral conformity—the approach taken by the Pharisees. It is that you must lead a very, very good life. The progressive approach, embodied in the Herodians, is self-discovery—you have to decide what is right and wrong for you. And according to the Bible, both of these are ways of being your own savior and lord. Both are hostile to the message of Jesus. And not only that, both lead to self-righteousness. The moralist says, "The good people are in and the bad people are out—and of course we're the good ones." The self-discovery person says, "Oh, no, the progressive, open-minded people are in and the judgmental bigots are out—and of course we're the open-minded ones." In Western cosmopolitan culture there's an enormous amount of self-righteousness about self-righteousness. We progressive urbanites are so much better than people who think they're better than other people. We disdain those religious, moralistic types who look down on others. Do you see the irony, how the way of self-discovery leads to as much superiority and self-righteousness as religion?

The gospel does not say, "the good are in, and the bad are out," nor "the open-minded are in, and the judgmental are out." The gospel says the humble are in and the proud are out.

- Why is self-righteousness such a problem? How is self-righteousness connected to pride? How do these prevent you from trusting and following Jesus? How does self-righteousness muffle good news?
 - If you had to pick one or the other, which kind of self-righteousness are you more likely to have—moralistic/religious or open-minded/progressive?
 - How does the gospel destroy self-righteousness and pride?
7. How is God calling you personally to respond in light of what we've seen in God's Word?

PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY PLAN

THE REAP METHOD OF BIBLE STUDY

REAP (Read, Examine, Apply, Pray) is a straightforward way to process what you're reading, either on your own or with a small group of people. This is a flexible plan—you could use it quickly in a 20 minute time span, or you could spend hours digging into the Word with it. Our hope is that you will experience how to study the Bible during your group time, and then try it on your own during the remainder of the week. It may be a little messy, and that's OK. It will get easier with practice. This isn't the only way to study the Bible, but we believe it is a helpful tool to have in your toolbox.

The goal of this kind of Bible study is primarily to grow in faith and obedience, not mere knowledge. Keep that in mind and be attentive each step of the REAP process. Remember to pray as you open the Bible, asking God to encourage, teach, correct, and train you (2 Timothy 3:16) through your time in the Bible, as well as to show you the grace of Jesus.

READ

Read the passage. If you have time, you might read it a few times, silently and out loud, with a pen in hand. Note or underline thoughts that might be significant. Answer the question, "What do I see?" As you're reading, think through these questions:

- What is happening in this passage? What things are emphasized, repeated, related?
- What do I see about God? What is God doing in this passage?
- What do I see about man? What are the people doing?

EXAMINE

Examine the passage. At this point, answer some questions about the meaning of the text. Take time to reflect. Ask yourself these questions, and write down your thoughts:

- How do I think the author wants his audience to respond?
- What do I learn about God's character?
- What wrong beliefs about God and myself do I have?
- What do I like? Is there anything that I don't like?
- Is there anything I don't understand?
- What seems most significant?

APPLY

Apply the passage to your own life. Answer the question, "No matter where I am spiritually, what would it look like for me to live out what I just read?" Some questions to consider might include:

- How do I need to repent or change?
- What truths do I need to believe?
- What false beliefs must I turn from?
- What can I do – empowered by the Holy Spirit – to live out this passage?

PRAY

Pray through the passage and your application, asking God to change your heart and to change your life. Ask that God would be glorified as you seek to apply the passage this week. Ask God to make his love and his grace real to you.

After you finish, share what God taught you with at least one person—your roommate, your spouse, your kids, your friends, or your coworkers. Don't keep what God taught you to yourself.

If you would like help finding a Bible reading plan, ask your group leader or pastor; Or, visit <http://www.esv.org/resources/reading-plans-devotions/>.

The above plan is modified from The Austin Stone and is available at austinstone.org.