

JUNE 5, 2022
LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
LIFE IN THE GRAY
1 CORINTHIANS 8; 10:23-11:1
SPRING QUARTER WEEK 6 OF 7

Getting to Know Each Other Better

1. What do you eat at a restaurant that you never eat at home?

Steak. But not just regular steak. Really good steak. A good cut. With good seasoning. And butter melted on top. And a solid sized baked potato with butter, sour cream, cheese and bacon.

Mostly I never eat this at home because it's hard for me to cook steak well (not well-done, but well) and it costs too much to buy the cheese and bacon and sour cream for just one meal. (These aren't things we typically keep in the house, so there is a high "start up cost," if you will, for the meal. I have to buy full portions of things I only need a little bit of, so it's not always money I want to spend.)

How about you?

Renewed by Grace/Equipped as Disciples

Read 1 Corinthians 8; 10:23-11:1

Josh taught us that the pattern to follow when we encounter teachings in the Scriptures on more obscure or no longer relevant matters is to practice identifying the Historic Truth, the Eternal (Timeless) Truth, and figuring out how to apply it today. We have to figure out what it meant "back then" to the original recipients, what the timeless principle is, and then how we should apply it today.

2. What are the challenges and benefits that accompany this process for understanding and applying Scripture? Why?

Let's think about the benefits first -

- Once you are able to identify the principle or principles in a text of Scripture you now have opportunities to use it or them in similar situations and/or not-so-similar situations. You always want to try and apply the principle in a manner that is as close as possible to the original circumstance that the Scripture describes before attempting to apply it in additional ways. For instance, the principle from today's message that "our rights are less important than our responsibility to love one another" is not a principle we can apply in our culture to eating meat sacrificed to idols, but that doesn't mean we can't apply it to a variety of other situations. Gleaning principles from Scripture really makes the Scriptures come alive and be relevant and sufficient for every generation.
- When we don't have a precept, finding a principle allows the Word to still be our number one resource for guidance in how to live for God.
- The Bible isn't a million pages long. Any book that had precepts for every conceivable situation would have to be a very big book. And even then, it would be hard for that book to be timeless.
- A book with precepts and principles means we have to pray and stay connected to God to discern how to apply those precepts and principles in situations which may be very different from the original ones. Staying close to God is always a good thing.
- What other thoughts do you have?

Let's think about the challenges -

- A major challenge can be understanding the original context without doing the extra study. There are rules for biblical interpretation and one of them is that the passage can't mean for us what it didn't mean for the original hearers, except in those places where the New Testament gives a double fulfillment or additional meaning to an Old Testament text (But we don't have that freedom). Some people think you don't need to do the extra work of understanding what was going on at the time of the writing and what the passage would have meant to the original recipients. It is these folks who get their principles and applications wrong.
- A second challenge is that when many people study the Bible the main question they seem to be asking is, "What does this passage mean to me?" That is the wrong question to ask. The right one is, "What did this passage mean to those to whom it was written?" Asking, "What does this passage mean to me?" guarantees you will get it wrong.
- A third challenge is that the Bible was written to "them" but it is also for "us." We are reading Scripture that was intended for someone else but that the Holy Spirit now illuminates for us so that we might discern principles by which we might live.
- A fourth challenge is getting the application as close to the original circumstance as possible, and then moving out in concentric circles if you have to. But if you don't arrive at the right principle then you can't arrive at the right application. It's here that we should ask, "What does this passage and its principles mean for me?"
- What other thoughts do you have?

3. Have you ever been in a situation with other people in which you discerned that how you lived out your faith "depended" on how others perceived things?

- **You were uncomfortable with someone exercising his or her Christian freedom...**
I remember when I was young and judgemental that I used to feel uncomfortable and condemning toward those who liked to dance or even have a good time.
- **You realize you have made someone else uncomfortable while exercising your Christian freedom...**
- **You are concerned that how you exercise your faith may make someone else uncomfortable...**
There are many areas (which I will not go into) where I am very careful with my liberties due to my role at the church. I feel freedom in areas where others don't and I realize that I need to curtail those liberties when I am in places and positions where others with a weaker conscience would stumble if they saw me doing something they thought pastors shouldn't do. I'm willing to limit my freedom out of love for them.

4. Can you share a time when cross-cultural patterns made you re-frame your sense of "freedom" in Christ?

No, but if you talk to any missionaries who have served in Europe you will hear stories about alcohol consumption that some in the U.S.A. might not feel comfortable hearing. European believers feel a freedom in Christ around alcohol that some American Christians do not feel. When those missionaries come back home they may need to re-frame their sense of freedom in Christ due to the Christian culture in which they find themselves.

Sent in Love

5. "When in doubt, let love lead." How can you apply Josh's closing idea in the coming week?

