

NOVEMBER 27, 2022
LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
ADVENT
ISAIAH 9:1-7; HEBREWS 4:14-15
FALL QUARTER WEEK 11 OF 12

Getting to Know Each Other Better

1. If you were to write a book, what would it be about? Why?

I might write a book entitled, "Things I Wish I Would Have Known Before I Married a Black Woman." Ha! The book would be all good, no bad stuff, and would touch on cultural issues that I had to learn along the way, and which have made me a richer man.

How about you?

Renewed by Grace/Equipped as Disciples

Read Isaiah 9:1-7; Hebrews 4:14-15

2. What comes to mind when you think about Jesus being your Wonderful Counselor? Why?

- **For additional discussion (if desired) -**
 - **What are some traits and characteristics of a good counselor?**
 - **In what ways does Jesus possess these qualities?**
 - **In what ways have you experienced/do you experience Jesus as your Counselor?**

Here are some of my thoughts.

- "What comes to mind when you think about Jesus being your Wonderful Counselor?"
 - 1. The idea that He is "Wonderful." This word can carry with it the idea of "extraordinary" or "marvel." He is not just your ordinary, run of the mill counselor. He is an extraordinary one. So that's good news.
 - 2. The idea that He is "Counselor." The word can carry with it the idea that He "advises well."
 - 3. So, Jesus is an extraordinary counselor who advises well.
 - All of that makes me happy and confident that when I ask Him for counsel, He will give me the best that there is. I can trust that I've gone to the Source. And given what I know about His omniscience, I can be one hundred percent confident that He isn't going to overlook any important facts or details. He won't fail to anticipate all of the ramifications of the counsel He gives me. He sees it all and knows the full outcomes of every decision I could make, even if I don't make it. This gives Him the unique ability to counsel me to make the best one.
 - What are some of yours?
- "What are some traits and characteristics of a good counselor?"
 - Patient
 - Good listener
 - Not judgmental
 - Has good ideas and solutions
 - Merciful
 - Truth teller
 - Safe
 - Keeps secrets well
 - What else would you add?

- “In what ways does Jesus possess these qualities?”
 - You might want to see if people can come up with verses for the characteristics they listed.
 - Patient - “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience,...” (Gal. 5:22)
 - Good listener - “Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your hearts before Him; God is a refuge for us.” Ps. 62:8
 - Not judgmental - “Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Rom. 8:1
 - Has good ideas and solutions - “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and [h]without reproach, and it will be given to him.” James 1:5
 - Merciful - “The Lord is gracious and compassionate; Slow to anger and great in mercy.” Ps. 145:8
 - Truth teller - “But I tell you the truth” John 16:7
 - Safe - “Protect me, God, for I take refuge in You.” Ps. 16:1
 - Keeps secrets well - “
 - One who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, But one who is trustworthy conceals a matter.” Prov. 11:13
 - What else would you add?
- “In what ways have you experienced/do you experienced Jesus as your Counselor?”
 - I experience Him in this way as I
 - Counsel with people at church and insights and ideas come to me that I know are from Him
 - Sit in meetings and pray for wisdom, knowledge and understanding (Prov. 2:6) and then receive it
 - Sit at my desk and pray Prov. 2:6 and Ps. 32:8 and Ps. 23:3 as I have to make decisions and get things done
 - Pray and then write these questions and leaders notes
 - Lead my Life Group
 - Have conversations with people throughout the week
 - I am always receiving counsel from Him through His Word, via His Spirit and through His people.
 - How about for you?

3. How does it help you to trust Jesus as your Counselor when you know that He

- **Cares for you tenderly? (cf. Ps. 32:8; 1 Peter 5:7)**
 - I will share with you some of my notes from the message.
 - Ps. 32:8 - “I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will advise you with My eye upon you.”
 - I made a note that Ryan said something along the lines of, “Jesus never treats us as clients. He loves us as children.”
 - I made a note that Ryan said that Jesus never disconnects emotionally. And then he quoted 1 Peter 5:7, which says, “7 having cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares about you.”
 - So it’s certainly easier to trust someone’s counsel when you know he cares about you, when you know you are not just another client, when you know the person counseling you has a tender heart toward you. All

of these things certainly make me more inclined to seek out that person's counsel.

- What about for you?

- **Understands you intimately?**

- I wrote in my notes that we need have no filter in His presence.
- Recently I was counseling with a church member who was so mad at God that he told me he was cussing and yelling at God. I told him, "Good. Tell God exactly how you are feeling and use the words you need to use. God can handle it. And He knows you're thinking them anyway."
- I don't know that I would advise cussing at God, but I would certainly advise telling Him exactly how you feel. Heck, Jeremiah told Him that he felt like He had deceived him. He called God a liar. That's pretty bold. Would you have that kind of boldness to tell God you feel like He lied to you, if you felt like He lied to you?
- It is good to know I can tell God whatever is on my heart and that I can, if need be, use strong language to do so. And I might as well say the words I'm thinking since He can read my mind. Of course, I want to be the kind of man who doesn't think those words, and I am that kind of person. I don't use profanity in my mind or in His Presence. But not everyone is at that place and they need to know they can be who they really are when they are around Him, even as He is changing them into people who will use that kind of language less and less.
- What about for you?

- **Welcomes you wholeheartedly?**

- I wrote that when we draw near we find we are forgiven saints, not outcasted sinners.
- There is a HUGE difference between seeing myself as a forgiven saint and not an outcast sinner. This is a matter of identity.
- I am welcome in God's presence because of what Christ has done for me.
- I am welcome anytime in God's presence because I have been declared "not guilty" and because I have been washed in His blood.
- This means I can come and ask for wisdom anytime. And the fact that I can surely encourages me to.
- And as I come, I come as a saint because of God's work in Christ on my behalf. Getting this into our minds is crucial and the importance of having this view of ourselves cannot be overstated.
- What about for you?

- **Guides you wisely (cf. James 1:5-6; Isa. 5:21; John 3:19)**

- I wrote in my notes that we have to "ask and wait."
- I wrote that I've got to have the humility to say, "Yes" to the counsel Jesus gives me.
- I wrote that Ryan said that I only really trust Jesus if I trust Him more than I trust myself.
- Knowing that He has (1) the wisdom, (2) the omniscience, and (3) the omnipresence to counsel me like no one else certainly makes me want to go to Him for wisdom and advice. Nobody else that I could go to for advice can hold a candle to Jesus.

- What about for you?

4. What were some of the most helpful things you heard in the message? Why?

- That Jesus never treats me like a client.
- That the LORD counsels me with His eye on me and that He instructs and teaches me.
- That God never disconnects emotionally (1 Peter 5:7)
- That I need have no filter in His presence.
- That good counselors create space for me to be me and that they make it okay for me to be me.
- What about for you?

Sent in Love

5. How would you like to apply this week's message?

I need to think and pray more.