

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY SESSION 7: SERVICE: GOD'S HEART FOR THE WORLD

MEETING TIME

Please record any thoughts, ideas, etc. here.

FOLLOW-UP HOMEWORK

LESSON

Psalm 82:3-4

³ *Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless;
maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.*

⁴ *Rescue the weak and needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.*

Isaiah 58:6-7

⁶ *“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free*

and break every yoke?

⁷ *Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe him,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?*

Psalms 146:7-9

⁷ *He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.*

The LORD sets prisoners free,

⁸ *the LORD gives sight to the blind,
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,
the LORD loves the righteous.*

⁹ *The LORD watches over the alien
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.*

Ephesians 4:20-24

²⁰ You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹ Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Luke 6:35-36

³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

IN-CLASS EXPERIENCE

REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

ASSIGN HOMEWORK

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK – EXPLORE AN AREA OF GOD’S HEART FOR THE WORLD

PART ONE:

Set aside about an hour for this part of the exercise. During that time ask God to show you one aspect of his heart that he would like you to mirror to this world. Dream big!

PART TWO:

Allow God to lead you to do something about it! Look for opportunities to partner with God; to express his heart to the world.

ADMINISTRATION

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY SESSION 7:

SERVICE: GOD'S HEART FOR THE WORLD

OVERVIEW

In this week's lesson we will start with God's desire for us to defend the poor and the oppressed and use that topic to discover that God desires us to be like him—to reflect his character. He also desires that our reflection of him result in good works; when our character becomes more like his, our actions will reflect that. We begin to do God's work in the world. During the In-Class Experience we will then explore other areas where God might want us to reflect his character. The homework will ask each participant to actively seek an area where they feel God may be calling them reflect his nature in a concrete practical manner.

PREPARING FOR THIS WEEK'S SESSION

Obviously become familiar with the passages of scripture we will be using. Also, pray for the participants. Tonight's meeting will be the last in this series. Pray that God will continue the habits that they have developed in this 40 day experience.

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR THE MEETING

All the usual supplies, but also bring

- A white board, large pad, or some other way to write and display the ideas from the class during the In-Class Exercise
- Markers for the board or pad
- Evaluation Forms

MEETING TIME

7:00 PM (10 MINUTES) WELCOME AND GATHERING

- Name Tags
- Focus Activity
- Prayer

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Well, we are at the end of our 40 day experience—but this is not the end of the spiritual journey that you have started. Tonight we would like to thank God for his faithfulness during these 40 days. Possibly you are thankful

for some growth that you have seen in yourself or some new insights. Possibly, you are thankful for new relationships. As you look back over the last 40 days, are there some things that come to mind? Allow people to share things that they are thankful for. Then ask someone to pray a prayer of thanksgiving, thanking God for all that he has done.

PRAYER

Allow the person you have asked to pray.

7:10 PM (10 MINUTES) FOLLOW-UP HOMEWORK

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S ASSIGNMENT AND QUESTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP

Last week you were asked to prayerfully consider the description of Jesus that you wrote during the in-class experience and then to choose one area to concentrate on. What area did you choose? Do you have anything to report? Allow several to answer

You were also asked to set aside a time of prayer—time to talk with God, but also time to listen. How did that go? Again allow participants to respond. After people have had a chance to share, continue:

Tonight/Today we are going to talk about the fact that God wants us to make an impact on the world. In order to start that discussion we are going to look at some scriptures from the Old Testament

7:20 PM (20 MINUTES) LESSON

Psalm 82 talks about the judgment that will come on those who are in power. In the middle of that psalm God gives these instructions

Psalm 82:3-4

³ *Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless;
maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.*

⁴ *Rescue the weak and needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.*

It's interesting. Preachers and teachers like to say that God really cares about how we spend and invest our money—and the reason we know that is true is because of the huge number of verses dedicated to the topic of money. Well there are 103 verses that contain the idea of oppression. There are 112 verses that contain the phrase “the poor.” In fact, God links care for the poor and the oppressed with proper worship!

Isaiah 58:6-7

⁶ *“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,*

*to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
⁷ Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe him,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?*

What does this verse say to you? Give ample opportunity for people to respond.

In a little bit I'm going to show you why I think the scriptures talk about this subject so often, but first I would like to get your ideas. Why is this an important topic? Why should we care about it? Again, give ample time for people to respond and discuss their ideas. Affirm all of the ideas. Don't give your answer too soon, even if someone else comes up with it. Let the group discuss.

Let's take a look at another Old Testament passage

Psalm 146:7-9

⁷ *He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets prisoners free,*

⁸ *the LORD gives sight to the blind,
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,
the LORD loves the righteous.*

⁹ *The LORD watches over the alien
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.*

Can anyone guess why I think that this issue is so important and shows up in the Bible so often? Allow people to respond.

I think that it is important because it is an important part of God's character. We are to care about the poor and the oppressed because God cares about them. We are to reflect God's nature. Does that sound familiar? Allow people to respond and discuss that idea for a few minutes. Then introduce the two following verses as just a couple of New Testament examples of this idea (that we are to be a certain way because God is that way).

Ephesians 4:20-24

²⁰ *You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. ²¹ Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

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Can you think of more examples of times when the Bible tells us to act a certain way because God is that way? Again, give opportunity for people to answer.

So, the way I would explain this concept is that God’s heart is to begin to become our heart. And when we begin to have God’s heart, that will affect everything in life: how we treat our enemies, how we treat those less fortunate, how we care for creation, and how we spend our money. But, those “good works” or “good deeds” don’t earn us anything. We aren’t saved because of them. We aren’t more holy than others because of them. To remind us of that, let’s look at another New Testament passage.

Ephesians 2:8-10

⁸ *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—* ⁹ *not by works, so that no one can boast.* ¹⁰ *For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

What do you think it means, “created in Christ Jesus to do good works?” Allow the group to discuss this. Some of the ideas that you might draw out are listed below:

- Our beliefs—our faith—need to result in action and good works
- It is God’s plan that we do good things, not just learn about them or feel a certain way
- We were created to partner with God in his plan for the world
- Christianity isn’t just about “when we go to Heaven.” There is real work to do now.

7:40 PM (10 MINUTES) IN-CLASS EXPERIENCE

So we have looked at the idea that when we begin to have God’s heart, that will result in us becoming involved in the world in those areas. The change in heart will result in action. But is this subject, the poor and the oppressed, the only area where we are to have God’s heart? Of course not! So, to get our ideas flowing we are going to brainstorm some other areas. Pull out the white board or large pad and markers. Draw a line down the middle. You will write each area that is brought up on the left side of the page. Later we will look at the right hand side. **For the next four or five minutes we will just write down some of the areas where God would want us to have his heart.** Take and write ideas as they come.

After about 4 minutes say, **Now we are going to go back and think about how these ideas might result in concrete action.** Take each item written on the left hand side and begin to ask questions like:

- If I had God’s heart in this area, what might I start doing differently?
- What might I stop doing?

- What might I start doing?
- Are there people involved in this area already with whom I might join?

Spend about 4 minutes filling in the right hand side of the board/sheet then say, **We will return to this idea in the homework for this week.**

7:50 PM (10 MINUTES) REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

Turn the class over to the person who has the reformed perspective on service.

8:00 PM (5 MINUTES) ASSIGN HOMEWORK

Our 40 days has ended. But I would hope that you would continue to work on the spiritual disciplines you have started. So, I encourage you to continue reading and studying scripture. I encourage you to be in an accountability relationship. Talk to your accountability partner. Perhaps the two of you would like to continue holding each other accountable. If that doesn't work, find someone else who is willing to be a partner in this spiritual journey.

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK – EXPLORE AN AREA OF GOD'S HEART FOR THE WORLD

PART ONE:

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PART TWO:

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8:05 PM (10 MINUTES) ADMINISTRATION

Thank everyone for coming and leave enough time for participants to fill out an evaluation form. Collect the forms at the end of the time.

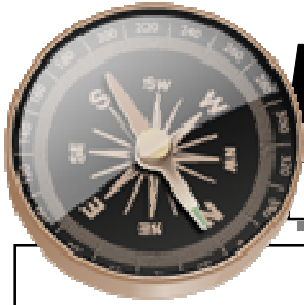
8:15 PM (10 MINUTES) BREAK/REFRESHMENTS

LEADERSHIP TIME

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR LEADERSHIP TIME

8:25 PM (35 MINUTES) MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TEAM TIME

9:00 PM (2 HOURS) CLOSE



Awesome Bible Study

Scripture Passage:

CAST *List the characters. Are they speaking parts or extras? Do they just watch or participate in the action?*

Hint: Imagine yourself directing this in a movie. What are the facial expressions of the actors? What would the actors look like? Who would you choose to play the main character? How many extras would you have to hire?

SETTING *Where does the action take place? What specific clues are you given about the setting?*

Hint: If you are the director where would you find a suitable location for the scene? What would it look like?

TIME *What time of day is it? What day of the week? Time of the year? Period in history?*

ACTION *Summarize what happens in the passage.*

Hint: Use short sentences. Summarize. Try to just get the main idea and movement of the passage.

STRUCTURE *Is there anything about the way the passage is laid out, or the story is told that is unusual or gives us clues to its meaning? What is the literary context?*

Hint: Look at the summary that you just wrote. Is there any pattern in the subjects or words used? Is there a theme or thought that runs through the whole passage? Is there something that all the characters know about but is not stated?

OTHER OBSERVATIONS *What other things do you notice?*

QUESTIONS *What questions does the passage raise in your mind? Can you find out the answer to any of them? Are there questions about history or culture that if they were answered, you might be able to understand the passage better?*

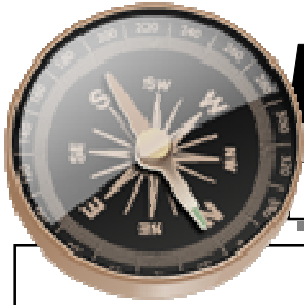
Hint: Now is the time to look in Bible dictionaries, atlases, commentaries, etc.

KERNEL STATEMENT *In one or two sentences write down the main message that the passage is meant to communicate.*

Hint: Try to write this from the perspective of the one writing the passage.

APPLICATION *How can I apply this to my own life today?*

Hint: Possibly write it in prayer form asking God to make this true in your life.



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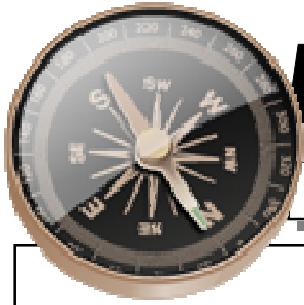
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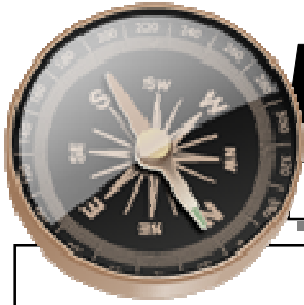
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