



Hey Foundry Group's Members,

We are so excited that you have chosen to be a part of a Foundry Group this quarter! Our team has been praying for you, your Group, and the conversations that will take place this fall.

It is our hope that you will take time each week to read the Word of God, and the devotions our writing team has put together, and to work through the pages in this workbook that correspond to the teachings. We believe that gathering together in a Christian community is a way for God to move in your life, challenge you, and help to refine you to become more like our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In this workbook you will find the following:

- **A Commitment Page**
 - This page discusses the importance and purpose of Foundry Groups as well as how they function. It ends with the five marks of a healthy group.
- **Guidelines Page**
 - Being in a Group is a commitment and one we hope that you will take seriously. Consistency is a key component to spiritual growth and we want your group to meet regularly, on time, and to study and pray with one another.
- **Workbook Questions**
 - You will find questions for our fall series Behind the Worship. The week is broken into four sections.

1. Groups Questions

- There are five to ten questions each week that are the “meat” of the content to discuss.

2. Digging Deeper

- If you find yourself with time left after completing the Groups Questions, we encourage you to dig a little deeper. This section has more reading, some word studies, and other commentary from biblical scholars.

3. Take It Home

- We want you to not only read the Word of God but we want you to apply it to your life. This section is a time to reflect on all that you’ve studied and discussed and write a truth you will live out.

4. Prayer Requests

- We want to encourage you and your Group to pray! This is such an important part of being in a Christian community, that we actually consider it the second most important part next to reading the Word of God. Write down your requests and the requests of your Group members and pray for them.

We can’t wait to hear and see all that God does in your Group this fall. If you have any questions or comments please don’t hesitate to reach out to our team at groups@goundrychurch.net.

Blessings,

Joshua DeVries and Chantal VanDyke



COMMITMENT

Small groups thrive on consistency and participation! The purpose of this commitment is to help you discuss and clarify your group's goals, expectations, and commitments.

FOUNDRY GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE

Foundry Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and the study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24-25). We'll do this by focusing on four primary activities:

SHARE - Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first, this sharing can include planned "sharing questions," but after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

STUDY - Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

SUPPORT - Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms, such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.

SERVE - Spiritual growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others but also through service to others. The role each of us fills

is essential to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP

For our group to be healthy, we need to...

1. Make spiritual growth our number one priority (Romans 8:29).
2. Accept one another (Romans 15:7).
3. Take care of one another (John 13:34).
4. Treat each other with respect (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).
5. Keep our commitments to the group (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b).

GUIDELINES & COMMITMENT

1. Dates

We'll meet on _____ nights for _____ weeks. Our final meeting of this quarter will be on _____.

2. Time

We'll arrive between _____ & _____ and begin the meeting at _____. We'll spend approximately _____ minutes in singing (optional), _____ minutes in study/discussion, and _____ minutes in prayer/sharing.

3. Study

Our studies will focus on the same topic covered in the previous weekend's sermon. Our goal is to hear from everyone every night and keep God's Word at the center.

4. Prayer

Praying for one another.

5. Homework & Attendance

Joining a Foundry Group requires a commitment to attend each week and do the homework ahead of time. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, work conflicts, and other special events—but not much more! If we cannot come to a meeting, we will call or text _____.

6. Dessert

7. Social & Service Projects

Get out your calendars and plan a day during our Social (Week of October 16) and Serve (Week of November 26) weeks for your Group to get together.



WEEK 1 SEPT 10-16, 2023

Groups Homework Questions

1. This past week in your devotions you read the following scriptures John 4:24, Psalm 100:1-5, Psalm 40:3-10, Revelation 7:9-10, Exodus 20:3-5, and 1 John 2:15. What scripture or devotion stood out to you? Why?
2. How would you define worship?
3. Are there other things in your life that take precedence over your relationship with God? What are some of those things?
4. Why do you worship God?
5. What keeps you from proclaiming God to the world? To your co-workers? To your neighbors? To your family?

6. Pastor Eric referenced Isaiah 2:8 and the fact that our lives are full of idols. What are small (or not so small), seemingly good (or maybe not so good) things that have slowly become idols in your life? Some examples might be money, family, status, power, influence, promotion, etc.

7. When and where do you worship God? Do you need music or your Bible, is it on a specific day of the week, or is it in a certain place? Discuss with your Group what worship looks like for you.

8. Take a few minutes and think about God and why you worship Him (Who He is and what He has done for you.), and write it down. Discuss with your group anything you wrote down. What are some idols that God is calling you to give up, what are some things that you need to get rid of in your life and put God back on the throne? Is He worth giving up your idols for?

Digging Deeper

Pastor Eric discussed in his message that you may not kneel down in front of it on the outside, but your heart kneels to idols. It may be another person, it may be money, it may be yourself, it might be your family. The thing your heart yields to, obeys, serves, the thing you talk about the most, the thing you spend all your time thinking about, is likely what you worship.

Read the following verses and discuss what it means to worship the Lord and only the Lord.

2 Kings 17:35-41

Matthew 6:24

Mark 12:30

1 John 2:15

Take it Home

Looking back over the message notes and study questions, what is the one truth you want to focus on incorporating into your life this week?

Prayer Requests

Encourage “popcorn” prayer and have everyone be involved (do not force anyone to pray)



WEEK 2 SEPT 17-23, 2023

Groups Homework Questions

1. This past week in your devotions you read the following scriptures Matthew 2:11, Matthew 4:9, Philippians 2:10, Revelation 5:8, Psalm 72, Genesis 12:5, and Exodus 12:27. What scripture and devotion stood out to you? Why?

2. In services, Pastor Eric talked about the act of bowing before the Lord. He mentioned that this gesture is good and right as long as it is done with the right heart posture. He also mentioned how often the act of reverence is misused in our culture. What are some examples that come to mind when you think about bowing down in the modern day?

3. What are some ways you “bow down” to worldly matters, even if well-meaning or unintentionally?

4. How would you define the word “temptation”? Based on your understanding of the word, is temptation a sin? What is the difference?

5. What are some things in your life that you would consider temptations?

6. During the message, Pastor Eric talked about Matthew 4:1-11, when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. Let’s not sanitize Scripture- Jesus had not eaten in 40 days. Can you imagine the level of starvation he had to be feeling? How physically, emotionally, and psychologically draining that would be on a person? And yet, when he was tempted with food and power, he resisted.

7. What things in your life are your greatest “temptations”? This could be anything from a favorite candy, pop, or treat, to more serious things like money, power, alcohol, drugs, or looking at things you shouldn’t. Do you struggle to resist? What triggers your sense of temptation?

8. Read James 5:16. This verse challenges us in a really uncomfortable way. It is hard to be vulnerable and admit our struggles. But as Mark Clark reminded us this summer, churches are meant to look more like a hospital- filled with people who are broken, wounded, and looking for healing. Do you open up about your personal struggles easily? Why or why not? What holds you back from sharing?

Digging Deeper

Read Revelation 4-5. In Chapter 5, the angel asks who is worthy to open the scroll. When it becomes evident that no one is (yet), John begins to weep. He is overwhelmed with grief. He hungers to know more about God and His plan for the world.

Do you have a hunger for God and His word? Do you seek him with great desire? When do you find yourself emotional or hungry for a relationship with God?

As it continues, John then sees Jesus, who is represented as a slain Lamb. He is not dressed in glowing, immaculate clothes or a jeweled crown, but rather as a sacrificial lamb. Why do you think he is presented this way? What is the significance?

John describes the golden bowls of incense being held, “which are the prayers of God’s people”. Think about how often you pray and the things you pray about. What can we learn from this verse about God and our prayers?

4. Do you fear God? Why or why not?

5. How should we live a life of awe and reverence towards the Lord our God?

6. Read Hebrews 12:28-29
 - What do you think “receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken...” means? How might this affect your everyday life?

 - What does it mean to worship God with reverence and awe? Do you worship in reverence and awe? What is something you can do before you worship to make sure you are in the right heart posture of reverence and awe?

7. Read Luke 10:20 and 2 Corinthians 9:15
 - What are two reasons for us to be thankful and worship God in reverence and awe?

Digging Deeper

Read the following passages from Deuteronomy:

Deuteronomy 4:23-25

23 Be careful not to forget the covenant of the Lord your God that he made with you; do not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything the Lord your God has forbidden. 24 For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. 25 After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time—if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the Lord your God and arousing his anger,

Deuteronomy 9:3

3 But be assured today that the Lord your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly, as the Lord has promised you.

1. When you hear the word “jealous” is it a positive or negative word to you? Why?
2. How does God being jealous of you make you feel? Why?
3. What provokes God to righteous anger? Is He justified?

4. Are you scared of God? Are you scared of His anger? Why or why not?

If reverence sometimes means to fear God, why does God say “Do not fear” and “I did not give you a spirit of fear”?

We are not to fear the world. We are not to be stifled in our obedience to God by the fear of man (what others might think).

Matthew 10:26-31

26 “So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. 27 What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. 28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. 30 And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

We revere God with the lives we live out of gratitude because what we deserved in our sin was to be destroyed by fire, but we were not because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. So now what?

Read 2 Corinthians 7:1 and 1 Peter 3:15

2 Corinthians 7:1

1 Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

1 Peter 3:15

15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

1. What are two applicable steps we can take to show our reverence for Christ?

2. What does “purifying ourselves from everything” mean? What does that look like in your life?

1. What is the “hope that is within you”? Are you ready to share it with gentleness and respect?



WEEK 4 OCT 1-7, 2023

World Communion Sunday and Special Guest Teacher Lynn Green

We are both excited and honored to have Lynn Green here with us this past week from YWAM Harpenden. As some of you might recall Pastor Eric did his discipleship training school (DTS) in Harpenden as did Stone and Morgan Felty who are now serving in Harpenden as missionaries that we as a church family support.

Below you will find a QR code that will take you to our website where you can find this week's questions.





WEEK 5 OCT 8-14, 2023

Groups Homework Questions

1. This past week in your devotions you read the following scriptures Hebrews 13:15, Romans 15:7-11, Matthew 11:25, Mark 14:3-9, 1 Peter 2:5, Hoesa 14:2, 2 Samuel 6:12-22. What scripture and devotion stood out to you? Why?

2. If I gave you \$70,000 to take a vacation or go out and buy something, where would you go or what would you buy?

3. What is the most extravagant gift you have ever received? Who gave it to you? How did it make you feel?

4. What do you think of when you hear the word “sacrifice”? What is something you’ve had to sacrifice recently? How did it make you feel?

5. What does it mean to bring a sacrifice of praise to God?

6. Read Hebrews 13:15-16 below:

15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. 16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

- What does it mean to offer God a “sacrifice of praise”?

- What did it mean to sacrifice in the Old Testament?
 - If you’re not familiar with the Old Testament sacrificial system, feel free to do a Google search for “Old Testament Sacrificial System” There are a number of resources available to help you get the idea down.

- Are there other sacrifices you can make to God, what might they be?

7. Read 1 Peter 2:4-5

4 As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— 5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

- What does Peter mean that you are being “built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood”?

- How do we offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ?
 - Think about the Old Testament Sacrificial system and what Christ accomplished on the cross. Also, think about Hebrews 13:15 “The fruit of lips that openly profess his name”.

- What does it look like to “do good and share with others” from Hebrews 13:16?

Digging Deeper

Read Mark 14:3-9

3 While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. 4 Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another "Why this waste of perfume? 5 It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly. 6 "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7 The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 8 She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. 9 Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

1. In 2021 the US median income was about \$70,000 ("a year's wages"). What do you think you would have done if you had seen someone pour out over \$70,000 worth of perfume on someone's head?
2. Why do you think she did it?
3. What would you give up or sacrifice to offer Jesus if he were visiting your home for dinner tonight?



WEEK 6 OCT 15-21, 2023

SOCIAL WEEK!

Prayer Requests

Encourage “popcorn” prayer and have everyone be involved (do not force anyone to pray)



WEEK 7 OCT 22-28, 2023

Groups Homework Questions

1. This past week in your devotions you read the following scriptures Genesis 4:4-5, 2 Chronicles 30:8, Romans 8:7, James 4:7, Proverbs 3:5-6, and Hebrews 12:4-9. What scripture and devotion stood out to you? Why?

2. In Genesis 4:1-16 we read that Abel brought his best to the Lord. What does it look like for you to bring your best to the Lord?

3. We often submit to our impulses and desires like Cain did when he killed Abel. Can you identify some of the things you impulsively submit to? Does it ever feel like you are serving two masters?

4. We all have moments when we know we should or shouldn't do something. When's the last time you faced a dilemma, what was it, and how did you handle it?

5. What is your attitude towards the word discipline? Does knowing that God disciplines those He loves, change your attitude towards discipline? Why or why not?

6. Pastor Eric referenced the Reformation Study Bible and within that writing, Cain responded with self-pity instead of repenting for his sin against God and man. When do you feel pity for yourself? Do you ever look at the lives that others are living and feel bad about yourself or covet the things they have? What are some things you need to pray over and repent of?

7. Take some time here to list off some of the things God has done in your life that you are thankful for. After making your list, spend some time in prayer praising God for what He has given you and His faithfulness.

Digging Deeper

We read in Genesis that Cain became angry and his face was downcast. He hadn't sinned yet, but he was on the verge as it was waiting to pounce on him. The Lord knew Cain was in a vulnerable position and asked Cain to pause and think about his next steps (Genesis 4:6-7) before his anger turned to sin. It is at this moment Cain could resist the devil and turn to the Lord, but as we read on, Cain did not turn and he let his anger develop into murder.

Read James 4:7 below:

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

The Greek word here for “resist” is the word “anthistemi” and means to oppose or resist in a hostile way not only a psychological attitude but in a corresponding behavior. It also means to speak out against it!

1. What does it mean to you, to be hostile?
2. What are some temptations you need to be hostile towards?
 - In your prayer time with your Group, speak out against some of these temptations if you can.

We have the choice as to who we will bow to and worship, we can bow to this world or to God, but we cannot serve two masters. If you lived two thousand years ago, you would have likely had to pledge your allegiance to a king or possibly an emperor.

What are some characteristics of a king or emperor that you would want in the man or woman you would



WEEK 8 OCT 29- NOV 4, 2023

Groups Homework Questions

1. This past week in your devotions you read the following scriptures James 1:22-25, John 14:21-23, 1 John 5:3, Joshua 24:23-24, Daniel 7:27, and Luke 11:27-28. What scripture and devotion stood out to you? Why?
2. How would you define the word “love”?
3. When you hear truth preached in church what is your reaction to it? What do you do with the truth once you’ve heard it?
4. What are some things you know you should do, but don’t?
5. What are some things you know the Bible tells you to do but you don’t do them? Why don’t you do them?

6. How can we expect to go deeper with God if we don't obey Him?

7. What has the Holy Spirit been convicting you of lately?

8. If loving God means obeying Him, but we choose not to obey Him, can we say we love Him? What are some things you need to repent of and obey God on?

Digging Deeper

As we look to James 1:22-25 there was a great excerpt that I came across in a commentary called James: An Introduction and Commentary that was written by Douglas J. Moo who is a professor of New Testament studies at Wheaton College.

James 1:23-25

23–25. James elaborates on the contrast between the person who only listens to the word and the one who both hears and obeys it, by means of a simile. The ‘hearer only’ is compared to someone who looks at his face in a mirror, but quickly forgets what he has seen. The doer of the word, on the other hand, looks into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues in it, putting it into practice. What is the point of the comparison? Does it lie in the way one looks, what one looks at, or the result of looking?

*First, those who argue that the contrast involves the way one looks note the shift of verbs in James’ Greek: In verses 23 and 24 he uses the verb *katanoēō* whereas in verse 25 he shifts to *paraklyptō*. James may, then suggesting a contrast between the person who glances casually in a mirror and the one who looks carefully into the perfect law (note the *nlt*, which translates ‘glancing’ in v. 23 and ‘look carefully’ in v. 25). However, the lexical basis for this interpretation is very slim. The verb *katanoēō* (vv. 23 and 24) does not usually connote a hasty or cursory glance. In fact, the verb regularly connotes thoughtful, attentive consideration (as in Luke 12:27, where Jesus invites us to ‘consider . . . the wildflowers’; and note the *ESV* translation ‘looks intently’ in Jas 1:23). Indeed, recognizing this, *Laws* suggests turning the comparison on its head. She thinks James may be contrasting the fleeting impression left by a careful*

look into a mirror with the lasting effect of even a momentary glance into the 'perfect law'. However, while looks (parakyp̄tō) in verse 25 can refer to a quick glance, it often reflects its root meaning (para, 'beside', and kyp̄tō, 'bend') and suggests the physical effort involved in stooping to look at something carefully (see 1 Pet. 1:12). It does not appear, then, that James intends any significant contrast by shifting verbs.⁹ We shall have to look elsewhere to discern James' meaning.

Second, then, the contrast James has in view may have to do with the object one looks at the mirror in verse 23 and the perfect law in verse 25. Many interpreters focus on the way James describes this mirror: in Greek, to prosōpon tēs geneseōs autou; literally, 'the face of his "genesis"'. The Greek word genesis often refers to 'birth' or 'creation'. Thus Hort argued that the phrase refers to the face a person was created with, in the sense of 'the representation of what God made him to be'. Verses 23–25 would then contrast the person who sees what God intended him or her to be but does nothing about it, with the person who sees what God wants him or her to be and strives to attain it. However, it is difficult to think that the invisible image of God in a person is what the person sees in a mirror. Another possibility is that genesis is used, as often in Philo, to connote that which is creaturely and transitory, as opposed to the divine realm of eternity. James then may imply a contrast between the 'face' or character that a person actually sees – his or her sinfulness – and the ideal face or character that the 'perfect law' reflects.¹⁰ This explanation has much to be said for it, but it may be oversubtle. Certainly, nothing in verse 25 implies that 'the ideal character' is reflected by the perfect law. Probably, then, genesis has the sense 'natural' (as in e.g. Wisdom of Solomon 7:5; Judith 12:8) and refers

simply to the actual physical face one sees in a mirror.¹¹ Moreover, the mirror was often used with a figurative meaning in ancient philosophy and religion, supporting the possibility that James sees it as generally equivalent to the perfect law.

Therefore, third, the point of the contrast in verses 23-25 is the result of looking. An obvious emphasis is on the contrast between 'forgetting' (mentioned in both v. 24 and v. 25) and 'continuing' (v. 25). This stress suggests that James may be using the look at the mirror to illustrate the superficial and temporary effect of the word on those who hear it without doing it. They get no more lasting benefit from the word than they do from looking at their faces in a mirror while combing their hair. The doer of the word, on the other hand, 'remains', or continues (parameinas). This verb, which has no object in Greek, may refer to continuing to contemplate the word (cf. net) but more likely refers to a continual doing of the word that one has heard (ceb: 'continues to do it'). In either case, the doers of the word are commended for demonstrating in their actions the continuing impact of the word on their lives.

James underlines his concern with the practical doing of God's word by shifting his vocabulary: the 'word' of verse 22 has become in verse 25 the perfect law that gives freedom. The referent of 'law' (nomos) in James is not easy to discern (see discussion in the section on 'The law' in the Introduction, pp. 65-67). To a Jew like James, nomos would normally mean the Mosaic law. This law was frequently called 'perfect' (cf. Ps. 19:7) and to it was sometimes ascribed the power to give true freedom (cf. Mishnah, Abot. 6:2). But the context makes us pause before accepting a simple equation of James' perfect law with the Old Testament law.

Because of the flow of the text, the 'perfect law' of verse 25 must at least overlap with the 'word' of verse 22; and the 'word', in turn, is identified as 'the word of truth' that mediates spiritual birth (v. 18) and whose reception leads to salvation (v. 21). The sequence in these verses, then, makes clear that the perfect law is closely related to the gospel. The pervasive influence of the teaching of Jesus on James' ethics suggests that this 'law' may particularly involve Jesus' ethical demands. James wants to stress to his hearers that the 'good news' of salvation brings with it an unavoidable, searching demand for complete obedience. The use of the word 'law' to describe this commanding aspect of the Christian 'word' is entirely natural for someone in James' position (and anticipates in some ways the 'law/gospel' distinction in later theology). This 'law' includes Old Testament commandments, as 2:8-11 makes clear, but James' characterization of the law as perfect suggests that these commandments must be seen in the light of Jesus' fulfillment of the Old Testament law (Matt. 5:17). And, while it is still a 'law', this summons to obedience nevertheless gives freedom because, in accordance with Jeremiah's new covenant prophecy (31:31-34), it has been written on the heart (cf. 'planted' in v. 21). With the searching, radical demand of the gospel comes the enabling grace of God. When Jesus called people to 'come' to him and to take his 'yoke' upon them, he promised that 'my yoke is easy and my burden is light' (Matt. 11:28-30)

Questions

1. Reflect on the passage from James and the commentary above. What is God pressing on your heart as you read these two writings? What can you do to be doers of the Word?
2. What does it mean when Jesus says, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light"?



WEEK 9 NOV 5-9, 2023

Groups Homework Questions

1. This past week in your devotions you read the following scriptures Matthew 15:8-9, Amos 5:21-27, Hosea 6:6, Psalm 51:15-17, 1 Corinthians 2:11, Psalm 24:3-4, and Isaiah 66:2. What scripture and devotion stood out to you? Why?
2. Was there anything about the skit that stood out to you, that bothered you, or maybe struck a chord with you? What was it and why do you think it impacted you?
3. Have you ever been guilty of “going through the motions” or offering “lip service” to God? What can you do to get your heart right before you approach God?
4. Do you ever look at other people and how they behave and think to yourself, “at least I don’t do that”? Instead of using others as a measuring stick, who should we be looking at as an example to live? What does He call us to?

5. What does it mean to you to have a contrite heart? What does it look like? How does it shape your attitude toward others?

6. When you sin, what is your first instinct? Do you try to cover it up, make excuses, or do you run to God? Why do you think that is?

7. Read Psalm 51:1-4 What about these verses stick out to you and why?

8. Have you seen your sin in God's eyes? Do you agree with Him on what it looks like? Or do you still think you've done some pretty good things in life to "make up" for it?

Digging Deeper

In the following commentary by Nicholas Perrin we dive deeper into Luke 18:9-14. Perrin's commentary "Luke: An Introduction and Commentary" does a great job of contrasting the two men in the parable and hitting at the heart of the fact that we all are in desperate need of God's mercy.

9- 10. The parable of the two praying men connects with the preceding parable in several respects. 216 First, like the previous parable, this parable front-loads the moral of the story while also providing a full-circle wrap-up (vv. 1, 8//vv. 9, 14). Second, the previous parable featured a villain who did not respect people (vv. 2, 4), and this parable addresses those who, like the unjust judge, have regarded others with contempt. Third, the two complementary parables focus on complementary individuals at opposite ends of the social spectrum: one empowered (the unjust judge) and the other marginalized (the tax collector). Fourth, both parables feature one religious figure and one non-religious figure, though with different roles. If the irreligious judge is the antagonist in the first story, in this parable the non-religious tax collector serves as the role model. Once again, religious social identity is a poor predictor of kingdom standing.

The parable is specifically meant for some who trusted in themselves (pepoithotas eph'autois), believing that they were righteous (dikaioi). The language is reminiscent of Jeremiah 7:4 (LXXX), where the prophet lambasts the people of Judah for trusting in themselves (pepoithate eph'autois) and their deceptively pious words while engaging in worship. Jesus will quote the very same passage in his temple action (19:46; cf. Jer. 7:11), auguring God's judgment on the temple. Against this background, Jesus' story of

two praying men is not just a warning against isolated religious folk but a thinly veiled word of judgment against the temple elite's self-deceptive piety.

Like the legal experts who did not need a physician (5:31- 32), the intended audience of this parable had seen themselves as having arrived with respect to the demands of the law. While it is true that self-congratulatory prayers like these were not atypical in first-century Judaism, this does not mean, as several Lukan commentators have opined, that such 'normal practices' were also Jesus' norm. 218 8), Jesus is critical of such public, self-serving displays.

The action begins with two men going up to the temple a Pharisee and . The language of one [ho heis] . . . the other [ho picks up on the construction in 17:34b, where 'one' is taken up from his bed and 'the other' is left behind. By introducing the pair of men with the same syntax, Luke may be hinting that these two individuals, despite their shared activity in a shared space, stand on opposite sides of a great elective divide. If Pharisees were regarded as the epitome of moral rectitude and tax collectors were the parade examples of immorality, the resolution of this story (v. 14) will On the contrary, as elsewhere in the tradition (Matt. 6:5- to pray : heteros] a taxcollector same subvert the first-century reader's expectations. 219

11. Striking a typical posture of prayer, the Pharisee is standing by himself (statheis pros heauton). He begins his prayer, as many Ancient Jewish prayers were begun, with a statement of thanksgiving, a berakah . But unlike so many scriptural recitations of gratitude, his prayer is not theocentric but self-referential. 220 The Pharisee thanks God that he is not like other people or, closer to the sense of the Greek, 'not like the

rest of mankind' (NJB), comprising as it does – along with the likes of this tax-collector – three categories of sinners (thieves, rogues, adulterers). If we take rogues (*adikoi*) to refer to individuals who engage in fraudulent and therefore defiling behaviour (cf. CD the sinners roughly correspond to what was a familiar the Belial': wealth, cultic profanation and adultery (CD IV, 17– 18).

Within the Lukan context, rogues and thieves may be recalling one or more of the bad actors in the parable of the persistent widow, the rogue judge (*ho kritēs tēs adikias*) and perhaps, on an implicit level, the behind-the-scenes third party hoping to swindle the widow of her land. Thinking himself to be morally superior to such unseemly characters, the Pharisee presents himself as one who is above the fray depicted in 18:1– 8. Yet all such posturing is in vain, for Jesus has already condemned the Pharisees for all three named VI, 11– 17), then taxonomy known as three types of 'three nets of behaviours (11:39, 42; 16:15, 18). 221

12. Having cleared himself of his peers' moral failings, the Pharisee congratulates himself on his righteous actions, including fasting twice a week and giving a tenth of all my income . There is no hint that Jesus is critical of the Pharisaical practice of the biweekly (Monday/Thursday) fasting. 222 (cf. 11:42). Rather, the problem lies with the Pharisee's haughty attitude.

13. The tax collector's spatial position in relation to the other worshippers, his physical posture and his actions all conspire to support his prayer: God, be merciful [*hilasthēti*] to me, a sinner! The contrast between the two characters is now striking. Whereas the Pharisee socially distances himself because he regards himself as superior to his fellow human beings, the tax collector by contrast is standing far off (*makrothen*

hestōs) out of a deep sense of his own unworthiness. So overwhelming is this conviction, in fact, that he cannot even look up to heaven (*oude tous ophthalmous eparai eis ton ouranon*), the locus of God's presence. This makes him humbler than the much humbled rich man in Hades who in fact did raise his eyes. Much less is there any indication that tithing is problematic (*eparas tous ophthalmous*) to Abraham in his bliss (16:23). 223 In beating his breast, the outward sign of inward self-humiliation and repentance (Josephus, *Ant.* 10.15), he declares himself not just 'a sinner' but in superlative terms as 'the sinner' (*tō hamartōlō*). He needs not simply mercy, as most translations attempt to gloss *hilasthēti* ('be merciful to me'), but expiation. 224

14. Jesus' summary (circling back to v. 9) makes clear that the Pharisee's self-directed prayer is but a vain attempt to justify himself - effectively aligning him with the Gospel's other self-justifiers (10:29; 16:25). By contrast, the tax collector returns home from the temple justified, fulfilling earlier predictions that the exalted would be brought down and the humble would be exalted (1:52; cf. 14:7- 11). That the tax collector's atonement (v. 13) and justification occur without recourse to the temple apparatus hints at an emerging economy where atonement is found no longer in the sacrificial cultus but in faith and repentance. 225 It is precisely this element that forbids Luke's reader from understanding this parable as merely providing an example of personal humility. On the contrary, the parable underscores the revolutionary impact of the kingdom where familiar, existing and deeply ingrained categories of justified and unjustified give way to a whole new configuration rendering the temple all but obsolete.

Theology

Though suffering injustice is part and parcel of life in a fallen world, the Gospel's many predictions of persecution suggest that Christians have been called to be special partakers of this experience. And when Jesus' disciples are confronted with injustice, their first and last response must be prayer. And what are oppressed disciples to pray but that God would secure justice against the adversary? Realistically, those who pray do so with varying levels of faith. Some will see no change to their straitened circumstances and give up praying altogether; others will persevere, continuously calling out to God day and night. Those who choose the latter path promise to have the kind of faith the Son of Man will be looking for on his return. Yet even the one who prays persistently is not necessarily clear of another set of dangers: the danger of self-righteousness. When Jesus' disciples pray believing that they are more righteous than other people, that other members of humanity are 'bad' while they themselves are 'good', they too have missed the mark. The sheer act of prayer is never an end in itself, since even the most pious-sounding prayers can be driven by the engine of a superiority complex and the fuel of spiritual narcissism. If followers of Jesus are to expect their prayers to avail, they must pray perseveringly and with an inward sense that they are, as any human being living or dead, in desperate need of God's mercy.

Questions:

1. As you read Luke 18:9-14 and the commentary above was there anything that stuck out to you, what was it?
2. Did you see any behaviors or attitudes between the two men or the bystanders who Jesus was speaking to, that you might at times exhibit?

What are those behaviors or attitudes?

What does it mean to be in desperate need of something? Are you in desperate need of God’s mercy?

Take it Home

Looking back over the message notes and study questions, what is the one truth you want to focus on incorporating into your life this week?

Prayer Requests

Encourage “popcorn” prayer and have everyone be involved (do not force anyone to pray)



WEEK 10 NOV 12-18, 2023

Special Guest Teacher Bob Wollam

We were excited to have Pastor Bob back again this week, he is such a blessing to our church and we are continually grateful for his teaching voice.

Below you will find a QR code that will take you to our website where you can find this week's questions.



