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2005

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CLEAN LIVING IN A POLLUTED WORLD

OPEN: Where do you see evidence that often “Christians are no different” than people in the world? Why is this so alarming?

DIG: Read the following scriptures and comment on what you learn about holiness;

- I Peter 1: 13-16 ° *What do you find most challenging from these scriptures?*
- I Peter 2: 9-10 ° *How are God's standards different from the world's?*
- Ephesians 5: 3-5 ° *In light of such plain teaching, how do we as Christians often justify unholy behavior?*

- I Corinthians 6: 18-20
- Hebrews 12: 14 ° *What are the results when we de-emphasize a call to holiness among us?*

- Matthew 5: 27-30

REFLECT:

1. How do we as a church maintain a grace-filled message and yet have a clear call to holiness? How do the two fit together? Is there tension between the two?

2. Why has the problem of internet pornography become epidemic in our culture? How have you witnessed this and what are the effects?

3. Review and discuss the importance of each point for overcoming sin in our lives:

- 1. Honesty-Confession-Repentance**
- 2. Bold Practical Changes**
- 3. An Accountability Partner**
- 4. Address Underlying Issues**
- 5. Spiritual Warfare (prayer, Holy Spirit)**

4. Give everyone an opportunity to share an area of your life where you need a higher standard of holiness and how you will use this plan to gain victory.

**language *things I watch (or read) *thought life *immorality *truthfulness*
**way I treat people *anger *integrity * _____*

PRAYER TIME: Cry out to God for one another for deliverance and victory and for the purity of your group.

Fired Up, but Not Burnt Out

OPEN: When you think about being “fired-up”, what Bible character do you visualize and why?

DIG: Read I Timothy 1:12-17 and discuss the following statements and how they were true in Paul’s life and how they relate to your spiritual fire.

“Passion for Jesus is the fruit of recognizing his passion for you.”

“Passion for Jesus is the fruit of recognizing his vision for you.”

In light of these statements, what should you do if you find your spiritual fire dying?

DIG: Read Philippians 3:7-13 and Philippians 1:3-11

- What was Paul passionate about?
- How did this passion move Paul “beyond ordinary human activities”?
- What was he willing to endure to pursue his goals? How is this proof of his passion?

REFLECT:

1. Looking back on your life, when have you been the most “fired up” for God? What caused this fire?

2. When you are “fired up” what does it look like? Why does our spiritual passion look different in each one of us?

3. Who in this Life Group displays great spiritual passion and how?

4. How is your spiritual fire today?

- *What fire?*
- *Quite frankly, “I’m burnt out.”*
- *I am scared of being “fired up”.*
- *I’m fired up!*
- *It just got lit.*
- *It is flickering.*
- *_____ is trying to put it out.*
- *Slowly, but surely my fire is growing.*

5. What do you need to do to keep the fire burning?

- Feed the Fire- I need to get into the word this week.
- Stoke the Fire- I need to be stirred up and challenged.
- Stack the Fire- I need to surround myself with some fired-up people.
- Use the Fire- I need to make some concrete decisions while I’m fired-up.
- Direct the Fire- Be realistic, Be balanced, Be positive, Be honest.

MY GOD IS SO BIG!

OPEN: When in your life has God seemed big? When has he seemed small?

FOCUS: Life

- What do you think of the following statement from today's lesson, **"The way I live is a reflection of how big I think God is."**?
- Contrast a small view and big view of God in the following life situations:
 - Dealing with a tough family situation*
 - Trying to reach your friends for Christ*
 - Leading a ministry*
- What difference do you notice?

FOCUS: Worship

- Read Psalm 34:3 ***Worship is about making God big in our lives.*** How does that change your view of worship?
- Comment on the following statement: "We don't worship God because he needs it, we worship God because we need it." Why do we need it?
- Review HOW GOD BECOMES BIG IN OUR LIVES.....
 - B**egins when God reveals himself to us.
 - I** notice and reflect on what it means.
 - G**ive God praise and glory.
 1. How does God reveal himself to us?
 2. Why do we so often not notice or reflect on what God has done? How can we do better?
 3. Why is it so important for us to put our reflections into words of worship?
 4. How will this effect our worship assemblies?

EXERCISE: Read John 8:1-11

1. What does this story reveal to you about God and his character?
2. What does this mean in your relationship with Him?
3. Write on the back of this sheet a paragraph praising God for what you have learned about him. Share these with the group.

Spend time in song and prayer giving praise and honor to our BIG God.

LOVE DOES NOT STRUT!

OPEN: When has your pride gotten you in trouble

DIGRead Matthew 23:5-12

- How do verses 5-7 paint a picture of “strutting your stuff”?
- How does Jesus tell us to combat such behavior?
- What concrete images does Paul give us of God’s kindness in this passage? What did God’s kindness *do*?
- Share stories from the gospels in which Jesus did something kind.

DIG: Read Luke 6:27-36

- Why does Jesus tell us that God “is kind to the ungrateful and wicked” (v.35)? What effect is that statement supposed to have upon us?
- In what way does Jesus connect God’s kindness to the mercy we are to show others (vv.34-35)?

DIG: Read Colossians 3:12-14

- What is the implication from this passage that we can clothe ourselves with....kindness?
- List the practical ways in which this passage fleshes out kindness. What does kindness do? What does kindness not do?

REFLECT:

1. The two greatest enemies of kindness are ***selfishness*** and ***busyness***? Which of these enemies do you struggle the most with and when?
2. Which of the following suggestions will you implement this week to become a kinder person?
 - § *Be sensitive- I need to find, look, and listen more closely to what is going on in other people’s lives.*
 - § *Be supportive- I will find practical ways to support someone I know who needs some special attention*
 - § *Be spontaneous- I will obey the promptings in my life to do kind deeds for someone in my path.*
 - § *Be slow- I will slow down so I can be more sensitive to what is going on in other people’s lives.*
 - § *Be spiritual- I will draw closer to God so his kindness will effect me.*
3. ***Here is the big challenge for the week.*** Jesus tells us to be kind even to those who mistreat us. Who in your sphere of influence has been unkind to you? What act of kindness could you show this person this week?

PRAYER TIME: Pray for the Holy Spirit to empower you to keep the commitments you have made today. Pray that our kindness will draw someone to fill the empty chair.

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU !

PRE: *If you have children in your group, have them come in and share how their mother serves them.*

OPEN: What situation have you recently faced in which you would like to say "it's not about you"?

DIG: Read Philippians 2:1-11

- Reading between the lines, what was wrong with the church in Philippi? Also look at 2:14 and 4:2
- What is a bigger problem for you, selfishness or pride?
- What does it mean to consider someone "better than yourself"?
- How does humility differ from being a doormat?
- What impresses you the most about the example of Jesus (5-11)? What phrase stands out to you in this awesome scripture?
- How will having the same attitude as Jesus, solve the problems of the Philippian church?

REFLECT:

1. If you gave a party for the people who helped shape your life by their unselfish caring, who would you invite to the party?

"If you really want to be happy, then pretend for one month that every person you meet is the most important person in the world." Dr. Robert Minniear

2. When do you need to say to yourself, "It is not about me!"
 - when I am criticized
 - when things don't go my way
 - when I am called upon to sacrifice my time for my family
 - when God interrupts my agenda with someone for me to serve
 - when there is tension between me and my spouse
 - when what happens at church is outside my comfort zone
 - when I don't receive the recognition I think I deserve
 - when _____

Prayer time: *Ask God to make you less self-centered and more others centered. Ask him for opportunities to serve.*

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