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WELCOME TO BIBLE STUDY

I am thrilled that you are joining us for this session of Women's Bible Study. You are in for a treat.

Kathy Christopher is the creator and founder of all that is Women's Ministry at Christian Assembly. She has been a pastor here for 25 years, leading, shepherding and discipling women to complete commitment to Christ. She is a woman of humility, humor, faithfulness and a deep passion for Jesus.

This session Kathy will bring her wisdom as she leads us through snapshots from her journey as a disciple of Jesus. She is focusing on grace, forgiveness, obedience, humility, community, disappointment, endurance and truth.

We pray that you will lean in to the study guide, the teaching and the time to process in community.

Blessings as you grow as a follower of Jesus this session!



Cheryl Fletcher
Pastor to Women and Community Life



GROUP LIFE

Welcome to community. We are made for life together but life together can get messy so here are some suggestions to make the time in your group fun, vulnerable and life-changing.

Be Attentive

We live in a loud and distracted world full of social media, text messaging and selfies. For the short time in your group, silence your phone and put it away. When someone is sharing, lean in to listen and ask questions. When you share, keep on topic and seek to be concise so that others can also share. Avoid interrupting or dominating the conversation. We want to learn from one another and we learn the most when we listen.

Come Prepared

The emphasis of this time is to know God and to grow in our life with Him. When everyone does the homework, the discussion promises to be rich and deep. Pray before you come in anticipation of what God will do in and through your group.

What Group Time Is and Is Not

We want to create a safe place for everyone to be vulnerable but also confident that what they share will not leave the group. This is a time to grow in love for God and for one another. This is not a time to fix one another or give unsolicited advice.

Give feedback that is: affirming (“thanks for trusting us with your story”), empathetic (“I’ve done the same thing”) and attentive (“can you say more about how that made you feel?”).

Avoid feedback that is: condemning (“oh my, I have never heard of anyone doing that”), counseling/fixing (“you should . . . have you tried . . . you need to stop . . .”) or all about you (“that reminds me of when I . . .”). Also be careful about encouragement that is “too soon.” When someone has suffered pain or deep loss it is usually not the time to say that it will all be okay, that “God has a plan” or that this has happened to you and that it served an amazing purpose in your life. Usually it’s best to just say, “I’m so sorry. That is so hard.”

Kids

Each week gifted and competent people care for our children across the street in our Kids’ Church facility. If your child needs you, your number will appear on the screens above the stage, or you will receive a text. If you have an infant with you during the meeting and he/she becomes restless, we have a room just for you in the main room by the restroom that provides privacy but also allows you to see and hear the message.

Covering the Cost

An offering envelope is on your table each week (or with your local group leader). Our desire is to never charge for the Bible Study (books, coffee, childcare, DVDs, etc.). This offering allows us to make sure that all women can participate. Give as you are able — a lot, a little or nothing. We trust that together we can make this study happen for all who desire to join us. If you would like to mail in your offering please make checks payable to Christian Assembly with “WBS” in the memo, then you may mail it to: Christian Assembly Women 2401 Colorado Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90041.

For use and reproduction of this study guide please contact women@cachurch.com
The audio messages that accompany this study are found in the iTunes
Podcast for “Women at Christian Assembly”

WEEK 1: GRACE



Notes from the Teaching

Use this page to record notes from the opening talk.

[For easy access to the audio messages you can install the App that is available for Apple and Android devices. Go to the App store and search Christian Assembly Women. These messages are also available on the Women at Christian Assembly Podcast].

Group Discussion: Grace

Welcome! We are so grateful that you've chosen to pursue God, join community, or just show up! Our prayer is that each of us find our hearts drawn closer to God and that we find the means and the courage to follow Him. We pray that in the process of study, hearing the teaching, worship, prayer and community we become more like Jesus. These are big prayers, but our God is bigger.

Discussion

If you haven't already done so, introduce yourself and share why you've chosen to attend this session of the Bible Study.

What comes to mind when you think of grace? (Don't try to come up with a right answer – the goal here is to honestly consider your current thoughts on grace.)

The Theology of Grace

Romans 3:23 tells us that ALL have sinned. **Romans 6:23** lets us know that the cost of that sin is death. (Have someone read these verses aloud.)

What is your honest response to the idea that we are all so broken that we deserve to die alone and separated from God?

Titus 3:3-7 gives us the answer to the great separation between God's perfection and our extraordinary imperfection. **John 3:16** and **Romans 3:21-24** show us the way to accept or access the amazing grace given to us. Read these passages and discuss: What are your thoughts and feelings as you look at these verses? Does it seem possible to you? Does it seem necessary for you?

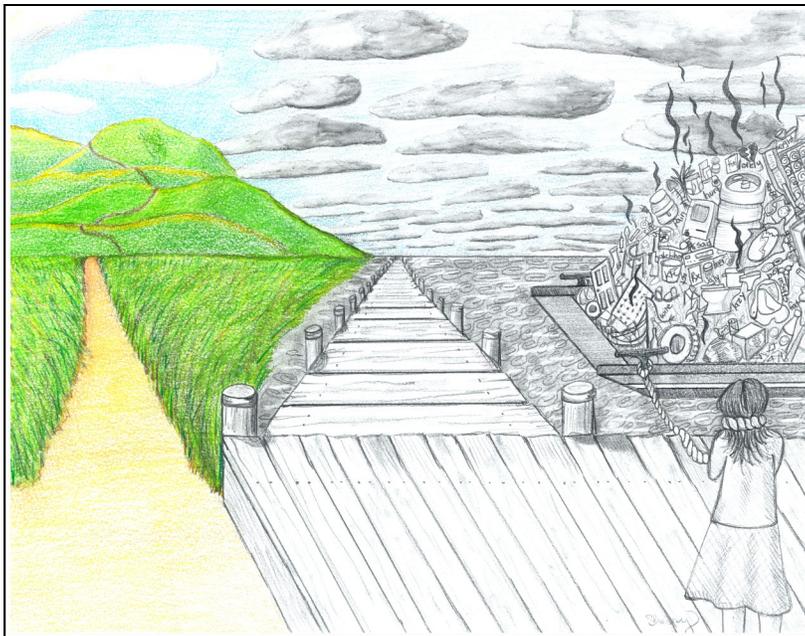
Grace is a life-altering truth and it is life-defining if we accept it. God has done everything necessary so that we can be in intimate relationship with Him. We accept that outside of God's love and grace we are utterly broken and utterly lost. He accepts us as we are and offers us His "right-ness": His righteousness. We choose or reject the life He offers. As you close, take a minute or two to sit silently and ponder the truths you've read together today. What would you ask of God? What would you offer Him? Speak your own private prayer to God.

Close in prayer as best suits your group and the time left.

**"The law tells me
how crooked I am.
Grace comes
along and
straightens
me out."**

Dwight L. Moody

WEEK 2: FORGIVENESS



Preparation

Sit quietly for a few minutes. Ask God to guide and instruct you as you work on this lesson. Pray that you'd break into new levels of understanding and forgiveness.

What comes to your mind – good and bad – when you think about forgiveness?

What have you experienced of forgiveness in your own life – given, received or withheld?

Forgiveness

Few people would say, "Forgiveness isn't necessary." Most would say, "I believe in forgiveness, BUT....." There are always so many reasons for us not to forgive – injustice, cruelty, prolonged pain – about as many reasons as there are wounded people. And yet there are also very compelling reasons that challenge us to forgive.

"Why should I forgive?" What answers do you find in the following verses:

Acts 13:38

Psalm 25:11

Psalm 130:4

Luke 23:34

Proverbs 17:9

From the verses you've just read, list 3 or 4 biblical reasons for forgiving those who have hurt or offended you.

While forgiveness is clearly commanded, that doesn't make it easy. Forgiveness for our sins came at a great cost: the death of Jesus, the Son of God. His death was a sacrifice offered to pay for our sin, the sin of all humanity.

*In fact, according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified with blood.
For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.*

Hebrews 9:22

Forgiveness is usually difficult for we humans because "they" don't deserve it. (The fact that we don't deserve forgiveness from God somehow slips from our reasoning in those moments!) So the ultimate price for our forgiveness was Jesus' death; as we determine to be forgiving people, the Bible tells us what we must do to be forgiven and forgivers. Read these passages and record what you learn.

1 John 1:9

Luke 6:37

Luke 17:1-5

Ephesians 4:32

Colossians 3:12-13

Letting go of resentment, hurt and violations by others is not easy. Consider your journey and the circumstances and people that have wounded you. What things tend to push against your desire to forgive?

Be Still

Once again, find space to quiet your heart and mind. Sometimes we struggle to forgive ourselves as well as others. Would you be willing at this moment to open your heart to God's love and ask for forgiveness wherever you feel it's needed? "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all wickedness" . . . *past, present and future!*

So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person.

Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.

Matthew 5:23-24

Now consider, is there anyone who you want to forgive you? Is there someone you need to ask for their forgiveness?

What is your plan to pursue that forgiveness and make things right?

**"To be a Christian means
to forgive the inexcusable
because God has forgiven
the inexcusable in you."**

C.S. Lewis

NOTES FROM THE MESSAGE FORGIVENESS



WEEK 3: OBEDIENCE



Preparation

What comes to mind when you hear the word obedience? Is your reaction positive, negative, or both?

Obedience is a concept that begins to shape us ('hound' us!) from the very earliest years of our life. We are first taught to obey our parents, then a wider circle of adults like grandparents, teachers and others in authority. Sometimes obedience to a harmful adult causes great pain. For some, obedience to God was introduced through church or family beliefs and practices. For others, God and faith were not a part of their upbringing. Obedience usually gets us smiles, affirmation and even rewards. Disobedience gets us discipline, consequences and even rejection.

Think about your childhood: what are three important rules that never changed and you were always expected to obey? (Two examples: [1] no matter what you do wrong, don't lie about it or [2] never take from the cookie jar). List your three on the next page.

**"One act of obedience
is better than one hundred sermons."**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

1.

2.

3.

Now consider 3 areas in your family where the “rule” was not an absolute all the time but could be flexible depending on circumstances (i.e. asking to go to a party probably wasn't always yes or no but depended on circumstances like where it is, what are they doing, etc.)

1.

2.

3.

Can you put into one sentence an overriding philosophy for your family? (like always show respect , or never lie, or obey before I count to 3...)

Obeying God

For our purposes we will focus on obedience to God. But first, record how your understanding of obedience to your family might effect your understanding of obedience to God.

There are basics we already know about God's will. If you are a Christ-follower or a God-seeker, you don't have to wonder about every facet of daily life. God has made clear what He wants of us. Below are just a few of the many Bible verses that tell us about God's will for each of us. After reading each one, write in your own words what it says to you.

Micah 6:8

Mark 12:30

“Thus if you have really handed yourself over to Him, it must follow that you are trying to obey Him. But trying in a new way, a less worried way. Not doing these things in order to be saved, but because He has begun to save you already. Not hoping to get to Heaven as a reward for your actions, but inevitably wanting to act in a certain way because a first faint gleam of Heaven is already inside you.”

*C.S. Lewis
Mere Christianity*

Mark 12:31

Matthew 5:23-24

Matthew 6:31-33

Ephesians 4:30-32

Philippians 4:8

These are only a small taste of the guidance God gives us through His Word. We don't have to wonder what God wants us to do toward others, whether in the church community or not. He has told us how to love and serve.

In the daily routine and challenges of life we encounter circumstances that don't seem as clear to us. Do I take this job or that one? Do I marry this guy or wait for a better one (or the perfect one!). Is drinking wine a sin or not? How do we discern God's will so that we can live in obedience?

What help do you gather from the verses below? Use the space provided to write what the verse says and how that may apply to you.

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Obedience

Psalm 143:10

John 16:12-14

The Role of Prayer in Obedience

Matthew 7:7-8

1 John 5:14

The Role of God's Word in Obedience

Psalm 19:8

Psalm 119:9-11

Psalm 119:105-106

The Role of Community in Obedience

Daniel 1:1-20

The Nature of God

As we seek to obey God it is good to remember who He is! Record what the following passage tells you about God's nature and why this is good news as you seek to obey Him.

Psalm 103:8-12

A Life of Obedience

The will of God – obedience – is a lifestyle, not an event. This is very important. Consider how worship, purpose and God's word can help you to persevere in obedience.

Worship: Not just singing, but worship as God defines it.

Romans 12:1-2

Purpose: We are not just “hanging on till Jesus comes.” We have a purpose.

Matthew 5:13-16

God's Word: God will not contradict His Word so we always measure our intentions against what the Bible teaches us.

Isaiah 55:10-12

Respond to God's Invitation

Obedience seems contrary to our very nature. God created humanity with a free will and so we now live with the ability to follow or walk away, to love or reject, to obey or to go our own way. What do you choose today? What will you do to make obedience your 'go-to' response to God? Take a moment and sit with these questions. Don't write out your response too quickly. As you consider your prayerful response, remember that it is only by the work of the Holy Spirit in us that we are ever able to walk in a way that honors God.

NOTES FROM THE MESSAGE

OBEDIENCE



WEEK 4: HUMILITY



Preparation

Humility. While there are many attributes of God that are foreign to us, this one rates up there with some of the toughest. We live in a culture founded on our rights. We live in a society where we are challenged to defend our rights – no matter who we are defending against.

It would be good for us to pause here and quiet our thoughts. Invite God to speak to you. This may be hard for you, but invite God to guide your time in the Word as it addresses this issue of humility (which of course must also touch on pride).

Make Me Simple

Guerillas of Grace by Ted Loder

O Ingenious God,
I rejoice in your creation,
and pray that your Spirit touch me so deeply
that I will find a sense of self
which makes me glad to be who I am
and yet restless
at being anything less
than I can become.

Make me simple enough not to be confused by disappointments,
Clear enough not to mistake busyness for freedom,
Honest enough not to expect truth to be painless,
Brave enough not to sing all my songs in private,
Compassionate enough to get in trouble,
Humble enough to admit trouble and seek help,
Joyful enough to celebrate all of it, myself and others and you
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Close this time with your own prayer of gratitude, request and invitation.
Consider this:

The truth is, I am _____ .
(an attitude or habit that you're not proud of)

But it is also true that I am _____ .
(what God and others say of you that is encouraging)

Humility

What does humility mean to you:

In relationships-

At work or church-

With God-

What does pride look like to you:

In relationships-

At work or church-

With God-

As you look at the following verses, write down what you learn about pride and humility and how it impacts your life (as well as the lives of others):

Psalm 101:5

Proverb 29:23

1 John 2:16

**"On the highest
throne in the world,
we still sit only on
our own bottom."**

Michel de Montaigne

2 Timothy 3:1-5

Romans 12:3

1 Corinthians 3:5-7

2 Corinthians 3:5

Psalm 69:32-33

Proverb 16:18

Psalm 147:6

Isaiah 57:15

Isaiah 66:2

"As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down you cannot see something that is above you."

C.S. Lewis

In response to these verses, write a few sentences contrasting pride and humility. Try to include differences in attitude, actions and results, if possible.

Applying Uncomfortable Truth

What are your greatest challenges to being humble?

Why do you think pride is so compelling for us? Why is it so much easier than humility?

Close your study with a written prayer. It can be one of confession, request, gratitude or other. The goal is to honestly express yourself in relationship to God and the humility He invites us to.

**"True humility is not
thinking less of
yourself;
it is thinking of
yourself less."**

C. S. Lewis

NOTES FROM THE MESSAGE

HUMILITY



WEEK 5: COMMUNITY



Preparation

Church. Community. Fellowship. What comes to mind when you consider your role or your presence in a church community? Is it merely showing up? Is it a long list of serving responsibilities? Is it all work and no play? Is it all play and no work? Pause for a moment and consider these questions then write out what you feel and believe about the role of the Church in your life.

Community

While we speak of the “early Church” as the beginning of the concept of church, in reality there are references to Israel in the Old Testament as the Church or the gathering of God. In Deuteronomy 4:10 God tells Moses to “gather the people to me” and this idea ties with the New Testament Greek word for Church. In Acts 7:38 Stephen refers to the Old Testament people of Israel as a ‘church.’ As theologian Wayne Grudem puts it, “The Church is the community of all true believers for all time.”¹ Every believer for all time (even OT believers) make up the Church.

Why does this matter to us? Because as we study the Church today it is important to know that this is not just a new or American or even New Testament idea. It is God’s idea of how His people will best worship Him, serve Him, live out faith and serve one another. The Church is God’s Plan A for humanity.

1. Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, Wayne Grudem. Zondervan Publishing, Grand Rapids. 1994. p. 853.

The Church is identified by several metaphors in the New Testament. From the verses found in the chart below, identify the word/picture used to describe God's people in community. Also, what does that metaphor show of how we are to be with God and with one another?

Verses	Word/Picture	Implications For Us
1 Tim 5:1-2 Eph 3:14 2 Cor 6:18 1 Jn 3:14-18		
Eph 5:32 2 Cor 11:2 Rev 19:7		
John 15:5		
1 Peter 2:4-8 Heb 3:3-6		
1 Cor 12:12-27 Eph 1:22-23 Eph 4:15-16 Col 2:19		

Pause a moment and consider your personal impressions and thoughts about the church as well as what Scripture tells us of God's view of the church.

What metaphor most appeals to you? Why?

Which metaphor is hardest for you to understand or embrace? Why?

If you accept these metaphors as God's intent for the Church, how does that challenge the way you are "doing church"? What can or will you alter, add or stop? (This can be a wrestling question so take a little time if necessary and answer as truthfully as possible.)

Grudem provides three purposes of the church that can help us understand our role individually and collectively as a community. Here we will use his phrasing (at Christian Assembly we use Worship, Family and Kingdom), but as you read the scriptures provided, write out that purpose in your own words, as well as your response to it.

1. **Ministry to God:** *Worship*
Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 1:12; Ephesians 5:16-19

2. **Ministry to Believers:** *Nurture*
Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 4:12-13

3. **Ministry to the World:** *Evangelism*
Matthew 28:19; Luke 6:35-36; Luke 4:40

“The story goes that a public sinner was excommunicated and forbidden entry to the church. He took his woes to God. ‘They won’t let me in, Lord, because I am a sinner.’ ‘What are you complaining about?’ said God. ‘They won’t let Me in either.’”

Brennan Manning

A healthy church will not favor one purpose over another lest they become imbalanced. For individuals, while we are called to participate in all three purposes to some degree, we may find that we are called or gifted more in one area than another. That’s why the picture of a body is helpful -- we use our great variety of gifts and strengths for the sake of the whole.

What are your strengths and unique gifting? What has God called you to contribute to the health and work of your church?

The Church as.....Real People.

As with our biological family, we desire the picture postcard version – everyone is clean, smiling, embracing and happy! But you have to wonder what was going on just 5 minutes before the camera snapped the picture. Some of us know from experience that it may not have been so pretty! In the same way the church community can appear friendly, kind and holy -- and it often is.

Yet the reality is that as long as people are involved there is also going to be conflict. Have you ever been disappointed or hurt by a church community? Briefly share the experience.

To the best of your knowledge, have you ever hurt or disappointed someone within your church community? If possible, will you share the circumstances? Has it been resolved between you and the other person(s)? Consider Romans 12:17-18:

Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

If there is a broken relationship with someone in the church, what can and will you do to “live in peace” with that person or persons?

As you close your study time, sit with this prayer for a few minutes.

Bring More of What I Dream

Guerillas of Grace by Ted Loder

O God,
Who out of nothing
brought everything that is,
out of what I am
bring more of what I dream
but haven't dared;
direct my power and passion
to creating life
where there is death,
to putting flesh of action
on bare-boned intentions,
to lighting fires
against the midnight of indifference,
to throwing bridges of care
across canyons of loneliness;
so I can look on creation,
together with you,
and, behold,
call it very good;
Through Jesus Christ my Lord.

NOTES FROM THE MESSAGE COMMUNITY



WEEK 6: DISAPPOINTMENT



Preparation

What was one of your biggest childhood disappointments?

How did you deal with it?

Disappointment is intricately linked to expectation. In your adult life, is there an area where you feel disappointment with yourself?

What is/was the expectation that set you up for disappointment?

Was it an unreasonable expectation?

Some people expect marriage to eradicate their loneliness. They marry and are disappointed. Some expect their job to be fulfilling and lucrative. They work hard but are disappointed. Some believe children will be the crowning glory to their life's fulfillment. They have children and.....the kids turn out to be normal and require much patience and guidance.

How do you think you can best deal with the problem of disappointment? Stop expecting anything? Work harder to meet expectations? (This is an opinion question, not right or wrong.)

Disappointment

One of the great enigmas of the Christian faith is the apparent conflict between the promises of God's Word and our reality. From Sunday School (if you were a Sunday School kid), to discipleship classes and Bible studies, we migrate toward the promises and try to avoid the warnings or stark realities of life. For example, this is often how we read John 16:33:

*[Jesus says:] "I have told you all this so that you may have **PEACE**
IN ME. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take
heart, because I **HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD**."*

The problem is that we live many of our days on earth with plenty of trials or sorrows. Pain-avoidance has become a national past time that is as prevalent in the Church as it is outside the Church. The goal is not to roll over and accept life kicking you in the backside. Rather, the question is: how are we to live in hope and promise even as we face all the challenges that come with being human?

When you have found yourself in moments of discouragement and disappointment, what is the question that resonates in your head and heart? (One friend who has battled cancer asks the question, "Where is God? I can't take any more.")

In his book *Disappointment with God*, Phillip Yancy tracks three common questions that discouraged and disappointed people ask:

Is God fair?
Is God silent?
Is God withdrawn (hidden)?

In response to these questions he decided to try and determine what God is like, and so began a journey reading through the Bible several times and looking for attributes of God rather than the promises of God. He asked who is God and how does He work?

What do you discover about God from these passages. Did God fail the people in the stories? Was He unfair or hidden? What was the outcome for those who met with God in very personal ways? How was their faith impacted?

Genesis 2:8-9; 3:1-7

Exodus 3:1-10

Exodus 15:24-26

Numbers 13:30-33

Numbers 14:10-12

Numbers 14:17-24

1 Kings 3:3-14

1 Kings 11:9-13

Whether it was for the first human beings, the people of God or for a king, God showing up in power didn't always mean a great outcome. While some may respond to these stories and say, "They deserved it because they were disobedient to God," not every Israelite was guilty of rebellion. Caleb and Joshua brought back a good report and still wandered in the desert for 40 years.

Whether from your own disobedience or simply the result of being human, do these stories speak to you in any way about disappointment with God? Is there some truth you can take for your personal journey?

In the Old Testament God shows up occasionally in very dramatic fashion: like a burning bush or a volcanic mountain. He also shows up as a still small voice (1 Kings 19). Ultimately, God often showed up in very unexpected ways.

What do you learn about God through these verses:

John 1:1-18

After all of the sin, rebellion, forgiveness, restoration and rejection, God comes to earth to live with us. And God suffers for our sake. Do the verses below add anything to your thoughts about human suffering and God's intervention?

Hebrews 5:7-9

Hebrews 2:18

Hebrews 10:23-24

Write a letter to God expressing your frustration, disappointment and/or faith in God. Be as blunt as you'd like – God can take it.

“I have learned not even to attempt an answer to the why questions . . . One question, however, no longer gnaws at me as it once did, ‘Does God care?’ I know of only one way to answer that question, and for me it has proved decisive: Jesus is the answer . . . By no means did Jesus solve the problem of pain – he healed only a few in one small corner of the globe – but he did signify an answer to the question *Does God care.*”

Philip Yancy

NOTES FROM THE MESSAGE DISAPPOINTMENT



WEEK 7: ENDURANCE



Preparation

Endurance. To some it may sound like an exciting test of their fortitude and will (like climbing Mt. Everest). To others it sounds grueling and pointless (like enduring a lengthy illness). There may be some for whom the word evokes painful memories of failure or loss. What comes to mind when you think of endurance? Give an example of a time you successfully endured a project, a process or a rough season in life. (If you endured a walk around the block and someone else endured a 200 mile hike, that's ok. This is not a competition!)

Endurance

There has been more than one young, tired, overheated woman in the last month of pregnancy who said, "I am so done with this! Enough already." Well, she isn't done is she? She has a few more weeks and labor to endure before she will hold that baby in her arms. (Then she has a whole new set of circumstances to endure!) Our life is somewhat like that: I'm done with 'trying to be good' or with 'this job' or 'this marriage.' We run out of gas before we reach our destination.

I knew a young woman once who stopped two credits short of graduating college. She was "done." There are things we may have quit on early, but it's not a big deal. Other things are

important to others but not us. And sometimes we just give up and live with regret for years or a lifetime. What about our faith journey? Have you ever been tempted to give up? If so, describe the circumstances and emotions that brought you to that point. (Don't feel bad admitting it. You are in excellent company with others who became discouraged.)

What is an important goal in your life? To be happy? Rich? Married? Important? Thinner?

How does one determine an ultimate goal?

What gets in the way of you realizing that goal?

“God knows our situation; He will not judge us as if we had no difficulties to overcome. What matters is the sincerity and perseverance of our will to overcome them.”

C.S. Lewis

While we have certain life goals, some worthy and others...not so much, as Christ-followers we know that our life purpose is to honor God and do His will and His work. This is a purpose that also meets obstacles and even discouragement along the way.

Jesus tells us His ultimate purpose and goal. What do you learn from these verses?

John 17:1-4

John 10:10

John 14:30-31

John 19:28-30

Did Jesus ever consider not finishing? Look at Luke 22:42.

In terms of your faith walk , what causes you to be discouraged? What is most likely to keep you from enduring? List some of the things that bring discouragement below and what a healthy response might look like.

Discouragement

Healthy Response

Getting discouraged is not a bad thing, it just isn't the last word for us. God has promised that we have everything we need to live a faithful life – it just takes a lot of patience and prayer. What tools for encouragement can you gain from these Scriptures:

Galatians 6:9

2 Corinthians 4:1, 16-18

Hebrews 12:1-3

Colossians 1:22-23

¹³ Yet I am confident I will see
the LORD's goodness
while I am here
in the land of the living.
¹⁴ Wait patiently for the LORD.
Be brave and courageous.
Yes, wait patiently for the LORD.
Psalm 27

As you close your study time, choose either Psalm 27 or Psalm 73 to read. The psalmist expresses discouragement in each of these psalms, but works his way to a conclusion. After reading the psalm, write a few sentences that express the struggle and ultimate resolution of the psalmist. What do you learn here that will help you when you face areas of discouragement or weariness?

NOTES FROM THE MESSAGE ENDURANCE



WEEK 8: TRUTH



Preparation

What comes to mind when you think of truth? Describe it as clearly as possible.

Now it's time for a quiz. Answer True or False.

True

False

The earth is flat.

The sun revolves around the earth.

The earth was created in 4004 BC.

A deck of regular playing cards is satanic.

Dancing is a vertical expression of a horizontal desire.

At one time all of these statements were considered true...by someone. Science has disproven some and common sense has addressed others. When we talk about truth we must hold loosely to some things we've been taught in order to honestly pursue the truth. Ultimately it is God's truth that we are after.

Truth

What do we learn about God and truth from these Scriptures:

Titus 1:1-2

Hebrews 6:16-19

2 Samuel 7:28

Numbers 23:19

“God’s truthfulness means that he is the true God, and that all his knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth.”

Wayne Grudem

In summary, everything God says is _____ and it is impossible for God to _____. The Bible is considered God’s Word, written by a variety of people but all inspired directly by God (2 Timothy 3:16). What do we learn of God’s Word?

Psalm 12:6 The LORD’s promises are _____, like silver refined in a furnace, purified seven times over.

Proverbs 30:5 Every _____ of God proves _____. He is a shield to all who come to him for protection.

Psalm 119:89 Your eternal _____, O LORD, stands _____ in heaven.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will _____, but my words will never _____.

John 17:17 Make them holy by your _____; teach them your _____, which is truth.

God’s Word, spoken and written is utterly and eternally _____.

Living Truth

It is one thing to read and know what is true – what is God’s truth. It seems quite another issue to live in that truth. What do you think of Paul’s words in Romans 1:18-25? What does it offer by way of instruction? Encouragement? Warning?

God’s truth is an immovable rock we can stand on regardless of what life sends our way. Truth will not keep us from disappointment, pain or uncertainty, but it will always give us a foundation to stand on.

Write down what you learn of truth from these verses:

John 1:14

John 14:6

John 4:23-24

John 8:31-32

John 8:44

Galatians 5:7-9

Colossians 2:6-7

Reviewing what you just studied and gathered about truth, how does this touch your life as well as your mind? How does this impact how you choose to live?

In situations we face in life, how are we supposed to stand on the truth and live in the truth? Must we memorize the entire Bible and know how to apply it immediately? Well, that's one way but probably daunting. God has provided us a Champion to help us live in truth.

John 14:15-21

John 15:26

The bottom line for us is this: we are created to live in harmony and obedience to God. Living in the truth makes all the difference in every season and circumstance of our life. Paul's letter to the Colossians gives us a picture of this:

1:9-10 "So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better."

2:2-3 "I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

3:10-11 "Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us."

Is there a particular area of your life in which you find it difficult to stand firmly on the truth and to live the truth of God's Word? Write out your concerns as well as a prayer inviting the Holy Spirit to both lead and empower you to live in the truth. The results of our standing on truth will always lead to our very best life.

NOTES FROM THE MESSAGE TRUTH



THE PEOPLE IN MY GROUP

SNAPSHOTS: From the Journey of a Disciple.



PRAYER REQUESTS

