

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 20th September 2015

USING MY SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO GOD'S GLORY

As We Gather

Throughout life every decision we make is a choice between alternatives. For the Christian, the choices are based on pleasing God or pleasing self. The more we delight in God's presence, the more fruitful our lives (Psalm 1:2-3).

Reading Scripture JAMES 3:13 – 4:3 & 7-8a (see also PSALM 1 MARK 9:30-37)

Thinking together

Spiritual growth is a slow process requiring alternate periods of learning and of applying what is learned to daily living. In Mark 9:30-37, Jesus took His disciples away from the crowds in order to teach them the need for making wise decisions (commitment to His message). They still thought in terms of human / worldly standards.

Pride or insecurity can cause us to overvalue position and prestige. Ambition should not supercede obedience and service to Christ (Mark 9:34).

Why does Jesus require disciples to confess petty / selfish thoughts / behaviour even when He knows the answer ? Discuss

It is always painful to compare our motives with those of Christ, and like the disciples of old we need to ask ourselves whether we would say or do something if Jesus were listening / watching.

When you participate in an outreach ministry / church activity, what is your motive for doing so? Discuss

James was concerned that teachers (also preachers and those in leadership positions) should realise that it is not enough to have knowledge, but they should also have the wisdom to know how to use this knowledge correctly. True wisdom is a gift from God, and enables us to relate God's truth to daily life.

How does James describe true wisdom ? Discuss [James 3:17-18]

What is the nature of wrong teaching / preaching (false wisdom)? Discuss [James 3:13-16] (see also Mark 9:33-35 Matthew 6:1-18 Philippians 2:3-6)

What is the effect of false wisdom (human / worldly wisdom) on relationships in

- **The home? Discuss**
- **The church? Discuss**
- **Society? Discuss**

The ultimate choice in a believer's life is between human pleasure or God's will – a form of warfare [James 4:1-3 & 7-8a]. War is a fact of life -

= war within ourselves. Often we hide our motives behind spirituality (Genesis 12:10-20 Numbers 12 Mark 10:35-45)

True humility is knowing self, accepting self, being self, and giving self to others

Discuss this statement

= war between individuals. (2 Samuel 13-15 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 Galatians 5:13-15)

How does discord / friction / argument make you feel? Discuss

= war with God (rebellion against God). (1 John 3:4-6)

The only way to overcome this is to submit self to God and draw near to Him

How can we do this? Discuss

In Closing

Christian life is one of sowing and reaping. We are what we live, and what we live, we sow. What we sow determines what we reap.

The more we draw near to God, the more we will be like Him.

Do you talk to God? What do you talk about?

A PRAYER YOU MIGHT LIKE TO PRAY

Lord Jesus Christ, you turn everything upside down and make all things new. Pour your wisdom into our hearts that with childlike faith we may turn from selfish ambition and walk in your ways of mercy and peace. Amen

