

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, March 15, 2015

Passage: Mark 2:18-22

Memory Passage: Mark 2:19-20

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Mark 2:18-22.** How did the people know that John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting?

(b) For what reasons did John’s disciples and the Pharisees fast, and what outcomes were they expecting?

(c) Why did the people expect Jesus’ disciples to do the same thing, and what judgments might they have been making about them because of their lack of fasting?

(d) What is your current view of fasting? Do you fast? If not, why not, and if so, why do you fast?

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Matthew 5:16-18.** What two groups are being contrasted in these verses?

(b) What does the phrase, “when you fast,” tell you about Jesus’ view of whether or not His people would fast?

(c) Why do those who fast to “be seen by others” look gloomy? Why does Jesus call them hypocrites?

(d) How should followers of Jesus go about fasting, and how does this inform your understanding of why one should fast?

(e) What is the difference between the two rewards mentioned in this passage?

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Is. 61:10, 62:4-5, Hosea 2:14-20, & Mark 2:18-22.** At an actual wedding feast, why is it impossible for wedding guests to fast while the bridegroom is with them?

(b) What do you learn about Yahweh’s relationship to His people from the OT passages assigned for today’s reading?

(c) What is Jesus claiming about Himself when he refers to Himself as the bridegroom in Mark?

(d) What “day” is referred to by “when the bridegroom is taken away” (Mark 2:20), and why is this a cause for fasting?

(e) Is the “day” of 2:20 still in effect in our “day,” and if so, what does this mean for us as Jesus’ followers?

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Mark 2:18-22.** Explain what happens when unshrunk cloth is used to repair old garments, and what happens when new wine is placed into old wineskins. Also explain why each of these happens.

(b) Now interpret the parables themselves by answering the following questions: (1) Is Jesus talking only about fasting or is He talking about a larger concept, and if a larger concept, what is that concept? (2) To what does the new patch/new wine refer? (3) To what does the old garment/old wineskin refer? (4) What are the “new wineskins” about which Jesus speaks?

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Mark 2:18-22.** We have only had time this week to skim the surface of what the Bible has to say about fasting, but one thing I hope you have seen from Jesus’ words is that fasting is something that He expected believers to do as they awaited His return. Today I would like you to spend some time praying and meditating on the proper reasons for Christian fasting and what role fasting should have in your life. In what ways and for what reasons will you implement the discipline of fasting?

(b) Consider the words of John Piper from his excellent book on fasting: “This is the essence of Christian fasting: We ache and yearn—and fast—to know more and more of all that God is for us in Jesus. But only because he has already laid hold of us and is drawing us ever forward and upward into ‘all the fullness of God. My prayer for the Christian church is that God might awaken in us a new hunger for himself—a new fasting. Not because we haven’t tasted the new wine of Christ’s presence, but because we *have* tasted it and long, with a deep and joyful aching of soul, to know more of his presence and power in our midst” (John Piper, *A Hunger for God: Desiring God Through Fasting and Prayer* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997; 2013), 48-9).

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The Newness of the Kingdom