CHRIST CENTERED COMMUNITY (C3) HOMEWORK

“Edifying the body by embracing the grace of the Spirit to live out the love of the Son in fellowship that glorifies the Father”

WARM UP

1. Would you rather talk to a close friend about a really tough topic or a stranger about something you love?

DIGGING DEEPER

2. What did you question or disagree with during Sunday's message?

3. Clint mentioned a poll that says almost half the Christians under 30 in America think that it's "wrong to share one’s personal beliefs with someone of a different faith in hopes that they will one day share the same faith." (Please read the article at [www.barna.com/research/millennials-oppose-evangelism/](http://www.barna.com/research/millennials-oppose-evangelism/))

* It would be good to read the article yourself since it only takes about 5 minutes. You may even want to read it out loud to your group or print out some copies since many will probably not have read it beforehand. This will lead to deeper discussions.

a) What are your thoughts on that?

b) What do you think contributes to this mentality?

* There are many things that contribute to this kind of thinking. Cultural pressures may deceive some Christians. Some may be willfully ignorant or even blatantly disobedient to what Jesus commands. Lack of Bible based teaching and a fundamental misunderstand of who God is and His design for the world are important pieces as well.

c) Is this approach to faith selfless or selfish?

* Although it sounds selfless to say "I wont share my faith with you so you aren't uncomfortable or forced to hear my point of view." This approach is profoundly selfish because the person who avoids sharing Christ is simply avoiding an uncomfortable situation or confrontation that may arise when they share the truth. On top of that, it is incredibly unloving. If God is the best, then a person should do anything and everything in their power to help others know and enjoy the best as well. Withholding God is the height of being unloving. Instead of "hate speech" that would be "hate silence."

d) In the same poll, 94% of Millennials said "that the best thing that could ever happen to someone is for them to know Jesus." How does that fit with loving others? Evangelism?

* If the best thing that can happen to someone is to know Jesus and love is wanting the best for the person loved, in order to love others we have to help them know Jesus in any way we can. That is the definition of loving others. Therefore, in order to love people we have to be evangelist. If we withhold Christ for any reason, we are choosing to withhold life.

e) How does a God-centered worldview effect sharing your faith?

* + If God and His Creator-rights and desires and purposes are the measure of all things and God's ultimate goal is to be glorified (known and enjoyed), then if we fall in line with God's purposes we will do everything in our power to show Him off. A person who is radically God-centered will seek to make much of God in every situation and to every person. On the other hand, a man-centered person says sharing faith is culturally unacceptable and makes me uncomfortable and since my comfort and goals are the measure of all things I won't share my faith.

4. Read Isaiah 48:9-11. God says His name's sake and His glory are His motivation here. What is God's glory?

* John Piper (pastor and theologian) defines God's glory as: "The glory of God is the beauty and excellence of his manifold perfections. It is an attempt to put into words what God is like in his magnificence and purity. It refers to his infinite and overflowing fullness of all that is good. The term might focus on his different attributes from time to time — like his power and wisdom and mercy and justice — because each one is indeed awesome and beautiful in its magnitude and quality. But in general, *God’s glory is the perfect harmony of all his attributes into one infinitely beautiful and personal being.*"
* God's glory is God's perfect character.
1. For His name sake, what does God promise to do and not do?
* He promises both to not cut off His people (salvation) and He promises to test them in order to purify them (affliction and sanctification).
* What things does God promise to do for His people under the New Covenant in Ezekiel 36:21-32?

b) How do those two things relate to the gospel?

* + At the core of the gospel, is the affliction of Christ for the salvation and sanctification of people. The core components of what God does at the cross are talked about in this passage and are directly linked to God's motivation to uphold the value of His name.

5. Read Heb 12:1-2. This passage calls us to be radically God-centered by focusing on Jesus, and we are called to be God focused because Jesus was. How did Jesus display His God-centeredness?

* Jesus endured all of the suffering and separation of the cross, and in the same way we are supposed to have our eyes fixed on Jesus (God incarnate), Jesus had His eyes fixed on the Joy set before Him.
* How does John 7:18 shed further light on Jesus' motivations?

a) What was the "joy set before Him?" (Hint: Read Psalm 16:10-11 & Isaiah 53:10-12)

* The joy that Jesus was fixed on was the glory of God. He sat down at the right hand of God which Psalm 16:11 describes as the place where full joy and everlasting pleasure are. Isaiah 53 tells us the the sanctification of the Son's labor was the pleasure of God that would prosper in His work at the cross. Finally, Jesus says in John 17 that His aim for was to be restored to the glory He had with the Father before the world began. The joy Jesus was pursuing is the preservation, display, and enjoyment of the glory of God!
1. What will looking to Jesus equip us to do (verse 1)?
* Lay aside every weight
* Avoid sin that trips us up
* Run the race God has set out for us with endurance

c) How does looking to Jesus' pursuit of joy in God help us with each of those things?

* This is an application question. Fist ask how each of the things listed above looks in our lives. Then how does knowing Jesus and being satisfied in Him help us lay aside weights, avoid sin, and run with endurance?
* Jesus's pursuit of joy was a pursuit of see, savoring, and displaying the glory of God to the point of death. Jesus was radically after His joy in God more than anything.
* Lay aside every weight - These things are not necessarily sin but that are not best. They are things that can distract us and weigh us down as we pursue God. Pursuing radically God-centered joy means that we refused to be satisfied with anything less than Best. That includes good things that are not best.
* Avoid ensnaring sins - Sin is preferring anything to God or glorifying anything more than God. The key to fighting sin is knowing God and experiencing the satisfaction that only God can give. That pleasure in God ruins our tastes for pleasures in sinful things. So looking to Jesus' deadly pursuit of joy in God fights sin at the very root.
* Run the race with endurance - Running the race is living life in the way God has intended it. A runner who runs with endurance pushes through the pain and difficulties, and step by step pushes on to the prize at the end. Jesus did exactly that literally on His way to the cross. Every step to Calvary was motivated by the "joy set before Him." When the prize is greater than the pain, you will have the ability to endure to the end.

6. How can you be more radically God-centered this week?

How will that change the way you live?