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”

Red Text = Tips and guides to help use the questions

Blue Text = Sample Answers

Green Text = Additional questions to ask

WARM UP

1. What music do you love the most?

DIGGING DEEPER

2. What is the difference between loving chocolate and loving your neighbor?

* The English language only has one word for love so it is constrained in how well it articulates what is being expressed. In reality, it is more accurate to say we like chocolate because it brings us delight or it is pleasing to us. The Bible uses the Greek word *storge* to describe this kind of affection for something. It is a totally self-centered reaction that responds to what chocolate does for you.
	+ Johnathan Edwards call this "love of complacency. Complacency would be, “I love pizza.” In other words, “I find myself pleased by the qualities I find in pizza; namely, its taste.” That would be love of complacency. Or you might love a place or a country or lots of things. You could say you love them because they are lovely. They are pleasing to you.
* But when we say we love our neighbor, our primary meaning is not that our neighbor benefits us (although that may be true), but that we are seeking the best for our neighbor. This love does not respond to what your neighbor brings to the table but aims to do good to that person. That kind of love is not self-centered but should be God-centered, because we want good or Best (aka God) for the person we love. The Bible describes this love as *agape* which is the love of God.
	+ Johnathan Edwards calls this love of benevolence.

3. How would you define godly love?

* Love is willing best for the object loved.
* Or Love is an overflow and expansion of joy in God that gladly meets the needs of others.
* Or Love is an act of the will accompanied by emotions and affections that results in action.

a) Give me Bible! What verses support that definition?

* John 3:16, Rom 5:6-8, John 15:13
* 2 Corinthians 8:1-8, Zeph 3:17, Luke 15:20-24

4. Romans 8:29 tells us we are being conformed into the image of Christ. So, often times today, when we talk about controversial issues like transgender and homosexuality, Christians will say "We just need to love on them like Jesus did." What do they mean by love? And what do you think that looks like?

* Most often when people respond to controversial or uncomfortable topics in that way what they mean is "Lets just affirm and support these people by coming alongside them in relationship, but never be offensive to them because then they will be turned off to the gospel." That approach usually implies acceptance or at least comfortable tolerance of sin. Basically, don't stir the pot and hopefully one day people will just see Jesus in your gentle tolerance. Love in this light means tolerance and acceptance without being outspoken about the truth of sin or the wrath of God.
* Do you think it's wrong to "love on people like Jesus did?"
* What did it look like when Jesus loved on people?

5. In order to love like Jesus, we must see how Jesus loved. Read these passages and observe how Jesus often interacted with people:

This question is designed to get people to see that Jesus was not always meek and soft spoken. His love for God that overflowed to people was fearless and ferocious.

Matt 11:20-24

* Woe to you...Sodom was better off than you will be!

Matt 12:41-42

* Pagan Nineveh will condemn you!

Matt 23:15-28

* Woe to you...you are sons of hell, blind guides, fools, hypocrites, and whitewashed tombs!

Mark 8:33

* He rebuked Peter by calling him Satan.

Luke 13:1-5

* Repent or you will die like they did!

John 2:14-17

* Jesus physically confronted people who were tarnishing God's glory.

John 4:15-17

* Jesus calls out a woman in sin.
* Is it right for us to speak and act like Jesus did?
	+ Many times in the NT we are told to be like Christ (Phil 2:5) and that we are being conformed into the image of Christ (Rom 8:29) and that Christ never sinned (Heb 4:15).  The implication is that we should act and speak like Jesus demonstrated with a hatred of sin and a zeal for God's glory.

6. The Bible teaches that Jesus is God and God is love. Therefore, Jesus was always perfectly loving. So, how was Jesus being loving in the passages above?

* Jesus confronted sin and sinners at every turn in a variety of ways. He wanted people to know and love and enjoy God but that cannot happen without repentance. And there is no repentance without a knowledge of our sin and rebellion. Jesus wanted people to understand that sin brings death and the wrath of God because without that bad news the good news of life through His death and Resurrection is not very good. Jesus spoke truth boldly first because He loved God and His glory and second because He loved people and wanted best for them.

a) Read Job 5:17-18. How does that shed light on the love of Jesus?

* + Only through God's discipline and healing can we be happy and satisfied in Him over our sin. So the "wounds" Jesus may have inflicted with His words were ultimately to bring full and everlasting joy (Psalm 16:11)

7. Imagine you knew some bad news about someone - something uncomfortable or offensive or even scary. Lets say you knew they had an undetectable, deadly STD, and they could only get the cure if someone told them they had the disease. They will be scared or offended when they hear the news. So what would be the loving thing to do in that situation?

* The loving thing to do would be to let them know they are dying! Tell them they have cancer as soon as possible and in whatever way you have to so that they can be saved from that death!
* What if they get scared or offended by your news? Is it still loving?

a) Read Psalm 5:4-6 and Psalm 11:5-7. What is the terrible news in these verses? (Hint: It is NOT simply that God hates sin)

* God hates sinners. He does not simply hate sin. Sin does not exist apart from sinners to perform the sins. Sins are the result of rebellious hearts. It is not sin that God punishes in Hell. Sinners go to hell! God's wrath rests upon those who don't love him.
* How can God hate sinners and love the world (John 3:16)?
	+ God does not experience emotions like we do. He is not confined to a single emotion. He chooses to love us (pursue Best for us) in-spite of the fact that we are loathsome (evil or hateful) to him in our sin. God's hate makes His love and salvation all the more incredible. Talk about amazing grace!

b) Read 1 Cor 6:9-11. What is the good news in V11 that makes the bad news in V9-10 a loving message?

* The bad news is that God hates sinners and sinners cannot be in His presence (inherit the Kingdom of God). But the good news is that Christ paid the price for God-hating sinners to be sanctified, justified, and saved! Sin must be confronted and exposed before the gospel message can be heard and treasured.
* What hope does Paul give for people in the sins listed?

8. Ephesians 4:15 says we must speak the truth because we love. What truth have you been hesitant to speak because it was uncomfortable or confrontational that you need to speak because you love?