

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Message Series: Good Question – Week 2
Title: Meaning: Why Am I Here?
Speaker: Kevin Myers
Date: August 13, 2017

Icebreaker:

Describe something that was very different in the moral culture of your childhood world than it is today? Do you think the world around you, and its standards, was better then, or now?

Message Overview:

The second week of the *Good Questions* series was another town hall meeting format where attendees got to ask questions. Like the Apostle Paul when he faced the philosophers of Athens and answered their questions, Pastor Kevin fields relevant questions submitted by you to the campus pastors. Paul responded to misdirected spirituality in Athens by sharing the “new teaching” of Christ.

Like the corners of a puzzle, the Q&A format will cover four big cornerstone questions of life:

- **Origins: Where do I come from?**
- **Meaning: Why am I here?**
- **Morals: Who am I?**
- **Destiny: Where am I going?**

In week 2, PK tackled questions of meaning, addressing concerns about culture in today’s society. When we look at the world around us, how well do we really understand why we are here? When we understand that we are God’s offspring and allow His truth to calibrate our lives, we begin to understand the true meaning of our life.

In many cases, we allow our lives to be judged by the world’s standards (culture) or our own standards. In either case, we fall short of God’s ideal for us. When we are able to embrace God’s truth about who we are (His children) and how we are to live (His truth), then we begin to understand the meaning of our life.

Our worldview either comes from God, or from ourselves. All the puzzling questions in life are answered by our view of who is the ultimate judge of our lives.

Discussion:

(Leaders: The questions that follow are designed to stir reflection and discussion on this week's primary message points. Please read through them prior to your meeting, so you can be prepared to prayerfully pace your group well. And remember, as leader, your goal is to promote increased biblical awareness, as well as individual self awareness – a combination that with the help of the Holy Spirit, results in revelation and...transformation!)

Read Acts 17: 22 – 32.

Paul offers us insight on the meaning of life in TWO areas:

1. Meaning comes from being **God's offspring.**

Paul says that what ultimately matters is to revere God and do what He says. If we make sure God is at the center of what we do in life, we have found our meaning. We should be able to have a meaningful relationship with God and enjoy it forever! Being God's offspring sets what is meaningful in life.

- To what degree would you say God is as the center of your life?
- Would you say you have seen a shift in your level of devotion in the past year, and is it an increase or decrease?

2. Meaning comes from the **truth, so repent.**

The truth calibrates meaning. In the past, God overlooked ignorance. But now, He's asking everyone to repent because God will judge us. In Paul's case, the Greeks had set themselves up to be the judge. But Paul points out, if you didn't design life, you can't judge life. This was undoing to the Greeks.

- Have you ever experienced a situation where you were concerned about how the world would judge a certain situation in your life?
- How certain or uncertain were you of God's view of the situation?

Living in a World Without a Moral Compass

The world's view of life is that we start with "me" and do what is pleasing to our flesh. We have to understand this and know what we're battling, in order to know how to win. We are battling a culture governed by "me" centered people who don't acknowledge God's place in the world.

PK mentioned that attending church and participating in small groups are two examples of how we can sustain our personal reverence for God.

- *Read John 17: 13-19 aloud.* To be sanctified means to be set apart. If Christ's directive to us, as believers, is to function in the world, can you share examples from your own life in ways you live in the world but are not of the world?
- In your life and your family's life, what personal practices are important to sustaining your reverence for God?
- PK points out that everything in life needs a boundary – food, internet, morals, TV. Even good things, without boundaries, becomes destructive. In what areas of your life can you seek God's guidance to build meaningful filters?

Engaging with the LGBTQ Community

Starting with "me" at the center, instead of God, everyone is doing what they feel and desire and being their own judge. Culture can mistakenly give us the wrong perspective on these sensitive issues. It's important to respect and love people (understand their view), while still speaking God's truth. It's important to know God's design and will as laid out in scripture.

- Lead with compassion. PK points out that *acceptance without approval* is key in dealing with individuals who believe differently than us. How can you practice this principle of acceptance without approval in your own life?

Racial Tensions Are High

Often, racial tensions can lead to fear. PK points to Jesus and the biblical guideline of every person mattering and having equal significance in God's eyes. Our church should look like the kingdom of God, and we have the opportunity to do better.

- Have you ever felt fear or discrimination for some reason? What is God's perspective on our fear?
- PK says it's important to add faith and reason to the emotion of fear, so that we can get that settled internally. In what ways do faith and reason help to settle your fears, whatever they may be?

Practical Ways to Fight Injustice

PK points out that how we handle sensitive issues is significant. God has given us favor to carry heart and value out into the world. The most powerful antidote to battle disunity is unity, and we have that through the ultimate unifier – our shared love for Christ.

- How we handle sensitive issues is significant. It's important to be involved in the world around us so that Jesus shows up through us. *Where* do you see your biggest opportunity to model Christ's love to world?
- *How* are you uniquely equipped to make a difference in the world?

- In the discussion today, what came to light for you that requires you to shift your thinking and behavior toward an certain issue?
- Did this discussion bring up any other issues for you that you would consider to be moral dilemmas? If so, share with the group.

Wrap-Up/Close:

Do you tend to answer life's questions from the outside in, starting with God.....or did you find from this conversation that perhaps you start with a "me" view of your life. It's important to settle this within yourself, because your worldview shapes the way you live in this world, where you draw your boundaries, and how you model Christ's love.

Close in Prayer

Pray that God will use a move of the Holy Spirit to open up new opportunities to love others without judgement, and to use our unique giftings to touch a world that doesn't always honor His place as our supreme King. Seek His truth in areas of your life where you might be struggling to fully understand God's guidelines.

Throughout the Week: (Optional)

- If you have a LGBTQ person in your life, Kevin recommended the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach About Homosexuality?* By Kevin DeYoung. This is an indispensable resource for thinking through one of the most pressing issues of our culture. Order the book and begin to work through this sensitive issue in your own life.
- Write down the names of people in your life to whom you can be proactive in modeling Christ's love – perhaps a person of another race, different faith, or a different set of morals. Then, also write down some specific action steps you can take to reach out to that person.
- Identify the topic from this week's discussion that struck a personal chord with you, and seek out specific scriptures that address that issue. Pray those scriptures over your own life and ask for God's guidance as to how to be "in the world but not of the world" on the issue.