

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Message Series: GOOD QUESTION
Message Title: How Do I Live? (Morals)
Speaker: Pastor Kevin Myers
Date: August 20, 2017

Icebreaker:

PK described the difference between extroverts and introverts as extroverts being energized by interaction with people and introverts being drained by interaction with people. Are you an introvert or an extrovert? Is the person closest to you relationally the same or different?

Message Overview:

This week's message was the third in the *Good Question* series. Pastor Kevin (PK) described how the philosophers of Athens asked a good question to Paul: "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean" (Acts 17:19-20). Paul taught them about Jesus and listened to their questions. In this series, PK is going to teach and answer questions submitted by you to the campus pastors.

We have all sat down to complete a jigsaw puzzle at one time or another—and the system most of us use for completing a puzzle is to find the four corners first, and then piece together the flat-edged pieces to create a complete frame. It is only after putting together the framework that you can see how all the smaller pieces fit together in the middle. That's a metaphor for life and faith. The four weeks of this series will cover the four big questions in life, which are the corners of the framework for the puzzling questions that you have. The way you answer these four BIG questions determines how everything else in your life fits into place.

Four Big Questions:

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

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!)

This week, PK answered questions about morality. First, he pointed out that Paul was confronting the false beliefs that God was a distant being, neither concerned with who we are or what we do. Since our God is engaged, we should live righteously and engaged.

1. God is **engaged**.

Read Acts 17:27. In the verses preceding Acts 17:27, Paul explains that God made everything, including you (week 1), and he gives us meaning (week 2) *so that we would seek him, reach out for him, and find him*. Then, in verse 27, he explains that God could do all of this because *he is not far from any one of us* (week 3).

PK shared the story of leading his son, Josh, through a Bible study on trust. He sent him to the counter at McDonalds without money. Josh didn't know that his dad was right behind him with the money. God will not ask us to do anything that He's not willing to follow through on, because He is not far—He is fully present, fully engaged.

Paul was talking to people who thought that their gods had power without compassion. Their gods were disengaged dads who didn't care about the moral choices of humans. There was a gap between the gods and people. Paul was explaining that the one true God is not disengaged. There is no gap between Him and us.

- Have you ever felt that God was asking you to do something, but you knew full well that you did not have the resources (financial, emotional, relational, mental, etc.) to accomplish it? What did you do?
- If you did it anyway (like Josh going to the counter without money), how did that change you?
- If you had to rate how engaged God is with you on a scale of 1 to 10, where would you put God? Have you always felt that God was an engaged dad, or have you felt the gap that PK described? Can you share about that?
- If you had to rate how engaged you are with God on a scale of 1 to 10, where would you put yourself? How do you think you could reduce the gap between God and you?

PK gave advice on how we should pray and how we should live since God is engaged:

2. Therefore, we should live **righteous** and **wise**.

Read Acts 17:31. "For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead." Jesus will judge the world with justice, which is righteousness. Therefore, we have to know what it means to live righteously. Scripture tells us what it means to be righteous, and the Holy Spirit can guide us in how to apply Scripture to our lives, which is wisdom.

- Do you struggle to know how God wants you to live? Do you feel you need help in understanding what God's righteousness looks like, or with being wiser in your choices?

- Pause and consider areas of your life that need to come into alignment with what has already been revealed to you by God in Scripture. Take a moment to silently pray for how God wants to close the gap between his righteousness and your life choices.
- If anyone wants to share or ask for prayer, take time to pray as a group.

This week's teaching covered how we can parent well and help our kids to make good moral decisions and live righteous and wise. Questions included:

- How do we raise kids spiritually when we don't know the Bible well?
- At what point do you practice tough love to your kids at home? If you lose your temper with your kids, should you apologize?
- If your kids are bullied, do you teach them to turn the other cheek?
- How would you guide a parent to handle a prodigal adult child?
- Should we shield our kids from our world's horrors?
- How do we teach our kids the proper role of marriage?

Leaders: Take time to discuss these questions and PK's responses. A brief summary of each of the responses, along with the video of the sermon, is available on the 12Stone app and at www.12Stone.com/watch.

There was one question that was not in Sunday's sermon but that your group may want to spend time on this week, especially if your group is not focused on parenting. This question is closely connected to the message that God is engaged and therefore, we should live righteously and wise. The video clip is available online.

How do you revitalize and grow your spirituality?

PK said that there are principles we can apply to close the gap we feel between us and God. But what if we are in a time where our relationship feels dry? God may be allowing our faith wells to "dry up" to push us into deeper relationship with Him. We may have never developed a habit of prayer, meditation on the Word, or worship, or the old ways that we learned may have become less effective through rote repetition.

PK asked people to raise their hands to indicate if they were introverts or extroverts.

- How do you feel your personality affects how you approach God through worship and prayer?

One way to change your relationship with God is to vary the ways you encounter him. Some people are very extroverted, and feel connected with God through relationships with others – talking about God and what He is doing in their lives like we do in this group. They may like to worship on Sunday mornings as part of a large crowd, and get energized by serving and being with people. Other people may be more introverted, and a walk by a lake, singing in the car, or having quiet devotional time makes them feel closer to God.

However, if you feel a gap in your relationship, you might want to adopt an opposite style. If you are usually surrounded by people and noise, try solitude and silence. If quiet reflection and study has become dry, invite someone to chat or volunteer on a ministry team.

There are different styles, or pathways, to connect with God. Read the following list of sacred pathways (<http://common.northpoint.org/common/sacredpathway.html>):

- *Naturalists* draw near to God through nature.
Sensates draw near to God through the senses.
Traditionalists draw near to God through ritual and symbol.
Ascetics draw near to God through solitude and simplicity.
Activists draw near to God through bringing about social change.
Caregivers draw near to God through caring for and serving others.
Enthusiasts draw near to God through celebration and mystery.
Contemplatives draw near to God through personal adoration and heartfelt devotion.
Intellectuals draw near to God through their minds.
- Do you feel yourself drawn to God primarily in one of these ways? What would be another way you could develop your relationship with God? How could you spend more time with Him?

Read Isaiah 55:11. No matter how you approach God, you are growing in your relationship with Him, because spending time listening to God is never wasted time. God's word will not return to Him empty, but will accomplish what He desires and achieve the purpose for which He sent it.

Wrap-Up/Close:

- As we did in week 1, let's commit to living lives that demonstrate our view of God. Let's experience the kingdom of God in our lives and evidence of it in us, so that those who are far from God, but matter to Him, will start looking for the existence of God. Stay connected to the voice of God through reading the Bible and prayer, because there is one God and He can be known. God is engaged, and we pray that we will be engaged with Him.

Throughout the Week: (Optional)

- Visit the 12Stone app or www.12Stone.com/watch to review the questions and answers, and read some helpful explanations of moral questions.
- Plan to attend the Prayer Gathering on September 8 at 7:15 p.m. at Central campus. RSVP online www.12Stone.com/prayernight