

LEADER GUIDE for Life Group Homework 2.19.17

Quick Review

1. In his message on Sunday, Pastor Mark discussed 6 ways to excel in a pluralistic society. From the list, which one needs your immediate attention? Why?

Decide in advance to stand for God.
Never stop learning.
Steep yourself in God's word.
Choose believers as your best friends.
Stay connected to a church.
Remember that God will reward you.

My Story

1. Describe the unique giftedness and talent of someone you personally know. What is it about their ability or talent that you admire?
2. Can you think of an experience when you had to stand alone while the vast majority preferred to go a different direction? Share your experience and the outcome.

Digging Deeper

1. Read Proverbs 8:32-36.
 - What is the central message of this passage?
 - What does it mean to find favor from the Lord?
 - What is the connection between obedience and favor and how might it apply to Daniel's own experience in recalling chapter 1, specifically 1:8-10?
2. Read Daniel 1:17 and James 1:16-18.
 - According to Daniel 1:17, who is the source of learning, skill, and understanding?
 - Why does Daniel have a special gift that others don't have? Is that fair? What guidance does the New Testament offer to help sort this out for us? Read I Cor. 12:14-30.

This is a good time remind the members of your group that we are gifted to serve the Lord. Again if time allows, it might be good to point a few things from I Cor. 12:1-27 or Eph. 4:11-16.

- Why is it important to note that that our abilities and gifts come from the Lord?
3. Read Proverbs 27:1-2.
 - What wisdom is offered to us regarding arrogance and humility?
 - How does this relate to how the Lord has gifted his children?

The point of asking these questions is rather simple. We must give credit where credit is due and we must understand that we are recipients of God's blessing. Which in return means operation from a position of gratitude rather than a position of entitlement.

Taking it Home

1. What are some situations and scenarios when you feel most tempted to find favor in the eyes of others, instead of finding favor in God's eyes? What can you do to make the shift?
2. How does recognizing that our abilities and gifts come from God potentially influence how you feel about yourself and others? How does this impact your daily life?
 - If time allows, take some time to share your perceptions of how others in your group are uniquely gifted.
 - Offer ideas of how they might use their gift to be a blessing to the church or others.

When exercise your group could pursue is to take a ball of yarn and have the first person say something positive and encouraging about somebody's gifts or abilities and then pass them the ball of yarn, while still holding the string. Repeat the process until everyone has had a chance to say something about everyone. Talk about how we are all interconnected through our talents and abilities whether we realize it or not. Make the comparison with the Church body.

3. Living in a pluralistic culture is difficult. Where do you need to draw lines of conviction so that you don't compromise your faith?