



Matters of the Heart

Week of June 14, 2015

These discussion questions can be used the week following the message. You can use these questions for personal growth and development, or as a guide for Connect Group discussions.

Recap:

When you allow God to control your finances, you are free to be extravagantly generous. Using your wealth the way he directs you is showing your faith that he will take care of your needs. The heart of giving is a matter of the heart.

Message June 14, 2015 Matters of the Heart Read Matthew 5:27-30

Jesus makes every issue an issue of the heart just as your desires are a matter of the heart. Seeking earthly fulfillment of that desire (through sex, money, power, or otherwise) is turning your back on the salvation of Jesus and relying on an idol to be your savior. You cannot love God and live in sin; we live only what we love. Yes, the cost of following Jesus is high; it means giving up everything you've ever relied on for fulfillment, and relying on only Jesus to save your hurting heart. We must do whatever it takes to let go of our sin, sexual or otherwise, and embrace Jesus as our only salvation.

Pray

Jesus, I struggle every day with putting aside my earthly desires. Instead of lusting after worldly things, instead of thinking about things of the world like sex, greed, lust and power, give me the desire to seek to be filled only by you. By your word, and by your Spirit. Give me the strength to reject seductive lies and embrace your eternal truth.

Share your story! #LivingBrilliant

Getting Started

- What is your favorite guilty pleasure television show? (Hey, no judgement here okay?)
- When is the last time you made an excuse about something? Whether it was a legitimate excuse or not, describe the event and the excuse you used. How did you feel afterwards?

Listening Deeply

1. Have you ever really wanted something so bad (like a car, a pair of shoes, etc.), and then finally got it? Did it satisfy you? For how long? Is it still providing satisfaction for you? Share your story.
2. Compare Matthew 5:29 with the statement: "There is a very high cost to actually following Jesus." How would you explain this to someone who was in a new relationship with Jesus?
3. Look at Philippians 3:8 and apply it personally to your life. What are some of the things you've lost because you've chosen Jesus?
4. Read Colossians 3:5. How do you "put to death" the earthly nature. Give some real and practical examples.

(GROUP LEADER: The next question may lead to a time of confession and prayer for your group. Share that everyone is safe here, and what is said will never leave the room. Also share that when your spiritual family can pray for you to let go of sexual sin or earthly desires, it can be a very powerful and freeing experience. If this is uncomfortable for your group, do the exercise in Living Wide so we can all spend time praying for one another to let go of the idols in our lives.)

5. Knowing that Jesus has the power to draw you into him, allowing you to overcome the gravity of sin, answer the key question from the message outline:

What is more attractive than Jesus Christ in my life? What do I think it offers that God does not? Do you need your group to pray for you so you can find freedom from this idol? If the Spirit is leading you to share, then you should share and know that we are here to help you, not judge you.

(OR do the exercise in the next section)

Living Wide in Jesus

We all have sin in our lives. We all struggle to rid our minds of thoughts that God didn't put there. Our struggle may or may not be with sexual desire, but there is always struggle. Take some time right now to pray for each person in your group (before you share prayer requests because this is a different exercise). Stand in a circle and pray for the person to your right. Pray for their walk, their thoughts, their struggles, and however else the Spirit leads. When everyone has prayed and been prayed for, close as you deem appropriate for your group.