

Home Group Study Notes - 8/8/21

Wisdom

Introduction

What is wisdom? Ask for opinions. Ask when people in the group have been particularly wise or unwise. Who or what they tend to turn to when they need wisdom? (doubt the motives of anyone who says their home group leader! - joke).

Jl Packer's 'Knowing God' defines wisdom as 'The power to see, and the inclination to choose, the best and highest goal, together with the surest means of attaining it.' He puts it another way later on - '... the best way to achieve the best outcome.' Invite people to think of occasions they've had to choose between conflicting goals, and what it was like? How did it end up?

Discovery & Discussion

Read Prov 3:7,13 about wisdom. And Prov 8:34-36. Discuss.

We get wisdom from:

1. **The world** - which pulls us in the wrong direction. We Christians get it wrong much more often than we ought to be 'by now'. Read Romans 1:18-23 and 28-32 if you have the stomach for it! It's pretty sad reading.

Read out the following from Rick Warren (it was in Nicola's daily notes on Saturday!) and discuss it: *'Many of our troubles occur because we base our choices on unreliable authorities: culture (everyone is doing it), tradition (we've always done it), reason (it seemed logical), or emotion (it just felt right). All four of these are flawed by the Fall. What we need is a perfect standard that will never lead us in the wrong direction. Only God's word meets that need. Solomon reminds us, "Every word of God is flawless." (Proverbs 30:5).*

2. **The Word and the Spirit.** The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to understand the bible, and to put it into action. Read some or all of the following which all say this: Matt 7:24-27; John 14:26; Psalm 119:97-100; Ephesians 5:15-17.

The world thinks if God exists it's his job to make everyone happy and fulfilled. But that's not his purpose in creating us is it? It's to make us holy! And as the bible shows, suffering is often used by God to refine, build character and draw us to trust him. Read/discuss I Cor 15:19 and Romans 2b,3&4. What do we have hope in? Why does God allow/send trials while we wait?

What reactions do we often have to suffering? (examples: "Why??!! Why is God so unkind? What've I done wrong? Why's he forgotten me? I'm giving up on him, I don't understand him.") But if God is big enough to create the universe, he must be wise enough to know what he's doing in our lives. So how should we react to suffering? Jl Packer suggests 2 things:

1. Accept suffering as if it comes from God, asking ourselves how we believe God would want us to react, from the bible, and
2. Seek his face in prayer specifically about it - what do we sense he is saying about it all.

At the end of it, the better we know God, the more we'll trust him and cling to him when times are hard, and the more we'll shine for him, like the little lights all over the globe that Matt had a picture of on Sunday morning. Read Phil 2:12-18 that says something similar.

Response

Pray for each other to have passion to know God and his word. And pray for each other's trials.

Mike