

Matter Matters Discussion Questions

1.10.16

Leader Prep Section

Take time before your small group meeting to prepare by reading through the questions and scripture passage so that you can select 4-5 questions that are best suited to your group.

Try to work through at least one question from each of the sections - Hook, Book, Look, Took in order to move from observation to application.

When possible spend time in prayer for each member of your group.

Questions

Hook - Ice breaker type questions to help make the transition into the study time.

1. What are three of your favorite things and why are they your favorite?
2. If our whole life matters to God then why do we live as though only parts of it matter to him?

Background

At the pinnacle of creation God makes humans and all the language used to describe them and what they are to do is kingship language. Man and woman are meant to rule and subdue the earth and all that live in it. God also gives them clear instructions while using that language he tells them to be fruitful and multiple (make babies) and subdue (take care of) the world they have been given.

John begins his letter to one of his churches by making it very clear that what he has been teaching them about Jesus is drawn from John's own experiences with Jesus. He is reacting to the Gnostic notion that the physical is bad and that only the spiritual is good. John makes it abundantly clear in his opening statement that he has experienced Jesus in a physical way to make the point that Jesus was not some illusion pretending to have a physical body, but that he actually was a man while still being God.

Paul makes it clear in Ephesians 1 that the goal is for all things to be brought back together, reintegrated, rather than there being false separation between the body and the spirit or the sacred and the secular. That means the very goal of life should be to have everything we do be done in relationship to God the Father, Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Read Genesis 1:28-31; 1 John 1:1; Ephesians 1:8b-10

Book - These questions are designed to get you into the text itself.

1. What aspects of life does God begin giving instructions about after creating humans?
2. What senses does John mention in 1 John 1:1 to explain how he experienced Jesus?
3. What is the mystery of God's will according to Paul in Ephesians 1?

Look - These questions will take you on a deeper look at what the passage means for us today.

1. If matter matters to God so much that he directed humans to fill and care for this world then what steps can we each take to avoid the false separation between those things we think God cares about and the stuff we think he doesn't?
2. Do you think your faith would be different if you could see, touch and hear Jesus?
3. What would your life look like if things were reintegrated the way Paul describes in Ephesians 1?

Took - These questions are focused on applying the big idea from the text to our lives.

1. What steps can you take today to start believing that every aspect of your life finds meaning in Jesus not just the spiritual stuff?
2. What would it look like if Hillcrest really grabbed hold of the vision of the world as reintegrated under Jesus without separation between sacred and secular?
3. How do you think those who are not part of Hillcrest would respond if started living a reintegrated life in Bellingham?

Closing

Take some time together to pray for one another about how to best live out reintegrated lives. Be on the lookout for opportunities to share what you have experienced with others that they might understand God is interested in the whole person not just the spiritual side of things.

Reminder: Matter matters to God because everything he has made was good and one day he will renew this world to its Eden-like perfection. As the rulers put here to fill and take care of this world we must live reintegrated lives and not only look to a future where we escape this place. We must accept the reality of the “already but not yet” in which we find ourselves.