

Group Notes 3rd July 2011

Ice Breaker

Think back to when you were growing up, and the things adults used to say to you that at the time seemed like hard and fast rules, but now you realise they didn't quite make sense! E.g.

- If the wind changes your face will stay like that
- Don't eat apple cores, a tree will grow inside you

Share these pearls of wisdom with the group

Word

Read Romans 8: 1-11

Word Discussion 1

Romans 8 sets out some fantastic things that as believers we can enjoy;¹

- Being free from God's condemnation
- Adopted into his family
- Destined for resurrection and glory
- Full of hope because of God's love for us

Paul affirms our new life in Christ, draws some moral consequences and talks about hope for the future. It all seems pretty much sewn up in this passage.

Word Questions 1

- Can you put the four points above in order of importance to you, break out into twos/threes and share with the smaller group your thoughts and opinions.
- Try as a smaller group to come up with a 'definitive' order.
- Come back to the larger group and share thoughts and opinions. Notice any differences and similarities in lists.

Word Discussion 2

Paul explains how we need no longer worry about condemnation 'because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death' (Rom 8:2), he is saying that the Holy Spirit frees us with a liberating power from any hold sin may have over us. He is referring also to the fact that the 'old' law the Old Testament law had no power to save us from sin and death. (Paul is clear to state that Christ coming 'in the likeness of flesh', did not mean that Christ took on a sinful body, but that his was the only perfect sinless body.) Living in the power of the Spirit frees us from the power of sin.

To live in the power of the Spirit we need to allow our minds to be controlled. That means not only the physical things we do but also the way we think. Having the mind-set to live in the Spirit is almost a half way point between being free from the power of sin and being fully alive in the Spirit. Then we can truly allow the Spirit to control any decisions we make.

Word Questions 2

- How much do you agree or disagree with the thought that sin can have a hold over someone and can control their whole lives.
- Is the hold sin has over a person something that is chosen or can it not be helped?

¹ Some of these discussion notes are based on material written by;
Douglas J Moo – The NIV Application Commentary; Romans, Zondervan, Michigan, 2000

- How comfortable are you with the thought of 'something/someone' controlling your thoughts and decisions? What do you feel about this
- 'The Spirit controlling you will set you free' - the statement that something controlling you will set you free, seems to be contradictory, do you agree or disagree?

Word Discussion 3

To allow the Spirit to set us free, we need to be Spirit filled but how often do we need to do this? Being Spirit filled is something that can happen many times over, daily even. Ephesians 5 verse 18, says 'be filled with the Spirit', in the original Greek the verb, is the tense that is the continuing tense, to always be happening, to continue to be filled with the Spirit. Often at prayer meetings there is an opportunity to come forward for prayer, to receive the HS, and sometimes when you go forward there is a definite demonstration of being filled, speaking in tongues, falling flat over, feeling joyful etc, and sometimes when you go forward you don't feel anything you can be left thinking nothing happened, what's wrong? Be assured something will have happened. Jesus tells us ask and you shall receive, so if you ask for the HS to fill your life - It will.

We have to choose to let the Spirit of God control our life, we have that important part to play to choose to allow the HS to control, once we've made that choice God comes, to empower, to free, to give us life, frees us from sin, controls our minds, controls our decisions.

How can we be Spirit filled? This is easy, we make time and space to allow the HS to fill us. If we fill our week up with all sorts of activities, and only leave space for on a Sunday we will be probably not be Spirit filled, if however we spend time, in the week in worship, prayer, bible study there is more chance that we will be Spirit filled. By opening up space we give the HS space to work in. If we continually need to be Spirit filled, we continually need to make time and space to be Spirit filled.

Word Questions 3

- Think about a prayer meeting or a service you have been too, where people (maybe you) went forward to received the Holy Spirit. If you feel comfortable share with the group what happened there, what did you observe or feel.
- How important do you think being Spirit filled is to a Christian?²
- 'In an ideal world every Christian would be filled with the Holy Spirit from the moment of conversion' why do you think this doesn't always happen?³
- What advice would you give someone who is praying to be filled with the Holy Spirit but had not yet received an answer⁴

Worship Ideas

While some quiet music is playing spend some time in silence thinking through the questions raised tonight. Listen out for what God might be saying to you; take note of your emotions, allow yourself to be carried away with the music and your thoughts. Have a time of open prayer, where the whole group pray out loud.

Group Leaders – if appropriate and you feel it suitable for your group pray for the Holy Spirit to fill each and every one of you.

² Material used from Questions of Life, Nicky Gumbel, Kingsway Press, Eastbourne, 1996

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid