Small Group Questions

GIFTED

Miles McPherson with Michael Jr.
July 15, 2012

Announcements

1. For all Rock Church events, please visit http://www.sdrock.com/events/.

2. Let your friends know that they can always live stream the Rock Church Sunday worship experience by visiting http://www.sdrock.com/live/.

3. If you have not yet RSVP'd for our Regional Vision Cast Meetings please do so ASAP! North County is this Saturday at the Rock North County Campus at 8:30. Please email courtney.melenciano@sdrock.com for a quick RSVP. Thank you!

Memory Verse

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led." (1 Corinthians 12:1-2 ESV)

"For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10 ESV)

Discussion Starters

(Use one or both of the following opening discussion starters)

1. What is your current perspective of weakness as a Christian? Do you view it as "a thorn" alone or as a way for God to direct you back to him?

2. Do you know what your spiritual gifts are and are using them? If so, explain how you are using them.

Sermon Review and Introduction

We were very blessed this weekend to have comedian Michael Jr. visit us and share the great gift God has blessed him with, as well as hearing what his comedy is doing for those all over the country and beyond. In our groups this week we would like to explore the different passages that Pastor Miles looked at that reveal our weaknesses, but more importantly highlight God's strength in and through us for his glory.

1. If necessary briefly review the lesson plan from Sunday and any extra notes you may have taken with the group.

   - God uses our weaknesses to **redirect** us toward our strengths. *2 Corinthians 12:7-10*
     List your top three weaknesses
     1. _____
     2. _____
     3. _____

   - Get God's **perspective** on how to use the gifts he has given you. *Romans 12:1-2*

   - Walking by faith means acting before **knowing**. *Romans 1:17*

Add'l Notes:

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2. Read 2 Cor. 12:1-10 together as a group. A few things to consider before moving forward:
   - When Paul states, "I know a man…" this is a rabbinical way of actually referring to himself.
   - Paul uses the term "boasting" often throughout chapters 10-13 (cf. 10:8, 13, 15, 16, 17; 11:12, 16, 18, 30; 12:1, 5, 6, 9). His intention was probably in combat to the false teachers and their arrogance and lack of Christ-centeredness.
   - Notice Paul received a revelation and vision, and yet in his obedience and defense of the gospel didn't reveal it. Many people have visions, revelations, etc., but whether people need to know about it as opposed the glory of Christ is another story. And yet with the vision came a "thorn" to Paul. We never learn what the thorn is, but some views are as follows:
     - Spiritual problems (held by Luther, Calvin, and other early church fathers)
     - Other people or relationships (held by church father John Chrysostom)
     - Some say it was epilepsy (not sure where this view comes from)
     - Most say it was ophthalmia, a common eye problem (cf. Gal. 4:13-15, 6:11). This could have also occurred on the road to Damascus (cf. Acts 9, possibly an OT allusion to Josh. 23:13).
   - Paul's main focus in this portion of the epistle is v. 9. That through the great visions and even the harshest of "thorns" Christ's grace is sufficient and made perfect through all weakness.

3. Why do you suppose Paul was so concerned with not sharing the vision and revelation he received in heaven? What did he stand to lose if he did? What were the potential consequences of sharing it?

4. How important was the sufficiency of Christ's grace to Paul?
   - Rom. 3:24; 4:16; 5:15, 17, 20, 21
   - 1 Cor. 6:1; 8:1
   - Eph. 2:5, 7, 8; 3:8; 4:7
   - Paul alone references "grace" over 100 times in the NT.

5. How does this view of grace from Paul encourage you? Do you feel better equipped to face obstacles understanding the grace of God? Explain.

6. Read 1 Cor. 12:14-20 together as a group. How does the concept of spiritual gifts compliment Paul's view of the sufficiency of grace in the midst of trials in 2 Cor. 12:1-10?

7. Why is it so important to be constantly exercising your gifts? Reference what Paul states in 1 Corinthians, but also state some reasons you feel it is important.

8. Discuss with the group ways in which you will use your gifts to overcome specific trials, or serve somebody that is currently battling a "thorn" of their own.

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