

CROSSROADS BIBLE CHURCH

GROWTH GROUP CURRICULUM

June 16, 2019

"CITY OF GOD" - Week 6

For more information or to join a Growth Group, please visit our Growth Group page online at cbclife.org/groups or call the church office at 408.288.4115.

QUICK REVIEW

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

For those who weren't there or even those who didn't understand it very well it will help them to get acquainted with the text and topic. These questions are also designed to be "softball" questions in order to get people to engage and participate.

2. What is one thing from Sunday's message you are likely to remember two weeks from now?

For those who weren't there or even those who didn't understand it very well it will help them to get acquainted with the text and topic. These questions are also designed to be "softball" questions in order to get people to engage and participate.

MY STORY

1. Go around the room and share what you wanted to be when you were a kid and why.
2. What was your first job? What was the experience like? Did you take away any lessons?

These questions are autobiographical and should encourage participation. It might be fun to go around and ask everyone to share.

DIGGING DEEPER

Read [Read Genesis 1–3 and answer the questions below.

1. In what ways does God indicate that he revels in his creation? How does that make you feel about creation and about yourself?

This question is somewhat opened ended with no clear "correct" answer. However, we do learn that God was "pleased" (Gen 1:31) with the creation.

2. When the narrative gets to the sixth day, the account shifts into a majestic, first-person plural, "Let us make ..." and Adam and Eve are immediately put to work. List the jobs that God mentions.

Gen 1:28 "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

It might be a fun exercise to come up with vocations that are included in this mandate: i.e. farmer, herdsman, fisherman, ornithologist???

3. From the very beginning, according to God's own activity, there is a rhythm—a time to speak/work and a time to be silent/rest. Why and how should this apply to your life?

God instructs His people to keep the Sabbath holy (Exodus 20:8-11). The rationale in the text is that God rested on the 7th day and so should we.

Read aloud Matthew 6:19–21 and then work through the questions below.

Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV)

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

4. Why does Jesus tell us to store up "treasures in heaven" (v. 20) rather than "treasures on earth" (v. 19)? What does Jesus mean when he says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"?

Jesus is saying not to treasure earthly treasures, but to treasure heavenly treasure. Everybody, at the center of his or her soul, treasures something. To treasure something means to look at it and fill your heart with the beauty and the value of it.

Whatever that treasure is—if it is not God—it will enslave you. You will pay any price for it. You will do anything to get it. An inordinate dependence on money or material things, for example, has the peculiar effect of blinding you spiritually. Moreover, earthly treasures don't actually give you the security and significance they seem to promise. They can't possibly stop all the things—death, tragedy, broken relationships—that come along. You give to what you treasure. You always give most effortlessly to whatever is your real salvation, your hope, your meaning in life. If your real hope is in your appearance, career, status, or comfort, your giving will flow more easily into those items and symbols. If Jesus is your real hope, your giving flows out easily into his work and the lives of people.

Jesus is asking, "Are you willing to lose it all for me? Are you willing to let me have complete control of your life? Are you willing to make me the new source of your meaning and your identity and your security? Am I your treasure?"

5. How do most people you know tend to spend their time, energy, and money? What do you spend money on most effortlessly and joyfully?

Money is one of the best ways to identify the idols of our heart. Even if money is not an idol, money will often show us where our idols are. We can find out what our heart most loves and adores and worships and rests in for salvation—often it is where we most effortlessly and

easily and joyfully spend money. It may be useful to give this exercise to your group if the members have never done anything similar.

- Estimate what percentage of your money is currently going to the following.
 1. Christian ministry—church, Christian workers, other ministries.
 2. People outside your family with economic needs.
- Think about what this percentage says about your heart and treasure.
- Decide what percentage of your income you will give this year. Make it a sacrificial level. Identify in your own mind the sacrifices that you will have to make.
- Prayerfully determine how to distribute your giving among causes you feel will honor God.
- Decide at what intervals you will give, and plan a way to keep a record of how well you follow your plan.

6. How might you and your group go about storing up “treasures in heaven”?

Examples include:

- Giving money and possessions away in sacrificial proportions with joy.
- Giving that entails sacrifices in our daily lifestyle—how much we spend on clothes, travel, home, and so on.
- Giving radically to others rather than accruing surplus wealth to guarantee a financially secure future.
- Always looking for opportunities to help among our friends, our neighbors, the poor, in our church, in our city.
- Remembering that God is the owner of all things, and we are just the stewards of his wealth.
- Using our resources not for personal ends but for the protection of those with less.
- Taking genuine care of the widows, the poor, and the immigrants—the powerless.
- Modeling to the world a redeemed society in which wealth and possessions are used to build up community and not for personal fulfillment.
- Choosing, thinking about, and working at our jobs in a way that honors God, not as a way of accruing personal wealth, status, comfort, and so on.

7. One way to ensure that we store up treasures in heaven is to celebrate, reflect on, and give thanks for our treasures on earth. This is part of what we do on the Sabbath. In an article called “Bring Back the Sabbath” in The New York Times Magazine we read,

“There is ample evidence that our relationship to work is out of whack. Let me argue on behalf of an institution that has kept workaholism in reasonable check for thousands of years. Most people mistakenly believe that all you have to do to stop working is not work. The inventors of the Sabbath understood that it was a much more complicated undertaking. You cannot downshift casually and easily. This is why the Puritan and Jewish Sabbaths were so exactly intentional. The rules did not exist to torture the faithful. Interrupting the ceaseless round of striving requires a surprisingly strenuous act of will, one that has to be bolstered by habit as well as by social sanction.”

This quote demonstrates that purposeful rhythms of rest will not occur without intentionality. Brainstorm as a group, habits and practices that would help us observe a Sabbath.

TAKING IT HOME

- As you go through your week try to functionally to “work for the Lord” in all things.
- Decide what a Sabbath looks like for you and do your best to keep it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- June 23 This Sunday June 23, service will begin at 10:45
- June 30 Family Service.
- Make sure you have your fellowship event planned for the end of the Growth Group Semester!
- If your group is not meeting over the Summer you may want to schedule a fun event or outing.
- Let folks in your group know about your plans for the Fall Semester.