

## Small Group Discussion Questions - Fall Semester // Week Thirteen

*Remember, these questions are just tools for discussion. You don't need to 'get through them all'. Use the questions that are helpful, skip the questions that are not. And let the conversation flow naturally.*

### Optional Ice Breaker(s)

- a) Although it will be different, what are you most excited about for Christmas this year? What traditions are you able to keep during this season? What new ways of celebrating are you excited for?
- b) What is one of your Christmas "hot takes"? In other words, what is a controversial opinion about Christmas (food, music, movies, etc.) that you have?

### Passage and Discussion

#### **Read 1 John 5:13-20**

- a) What stands out to you upon first reading of this passage? What is a theme, verse, or word that you find encouraging? What do you find challenging in this passage?
- b) On Sunday, Dom began his message by reminding us of where we find answers to the question: "what do we know?" What has been your journey in trusting the Word to be the primary authority in your life? Has this always been an easy teaching for you to accept?
- c) If a non-Christian person were to ask you: why do you trust Scripture to be an authority on truth, how would you answer? How do we know we can trust Scripture to teach us truth?
- d) How do you think most non-Christians in our world today would answer the question: "what do you know?" How do Christians understand the concept of truth differently than a lot of people in our culture?
- e) First, Dom taught on 'hope in prayer'. How should knowing that God hears and answers our prayer requests shape the way that we pray? When you bring your requests to God, do you struggle with "approaching [Him] in confidence"? How can we grow in this confidence?
- f) Have you ever prayed about something, and God answered you in a way that you did not anticipate or expect? How do you think people often misunderstand verse 15 in our passage? How do we learn to pray "according to His will", as John teaches in verse 14?
- g) What does verse 16 tell us about praying for our brothers and sisters if they are struggling with sin? How should this teaching encourage us to be honest and vulnerable with people we trust when we are struggling with sin? Is something you practice in your own life?

- h) Next, Dom taught on 'hope in life'. How does knowing that God is sanctifying us to become more like Jesus give us hope in our lives? How should knowing that we have freedom from sin in Christ change the way that we live our lives?
- i) However, we are not perfect, and we still struggle with sin. What is the difference between progress and perfection (or, as Cam called it a few weeks ago, between 'struggling' and 'snuggling' with sin). What are a few ways we know that we are growing in maturity, even if we aren't perfect?
- j) Finally, Dom taught on 'hope in death'. On Sunday, he shared that he does not often think about or contemplate the truth of eternal life and heaven. Can you relate to this? Why do you think that we often fix our minds on earthly thoughts, rather than on the truth of eternal life?
- k) C.S. Lewis said, "If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this." If you're being honest, how does your belief in eternal life change the way you live your life? How should it influence our decisions, actions, thoughts, etc.?
- l) In your own words, share about the impact that the hope of eternal life has had on your life. Have you walked through a season when your only hope was in Christ, and was in the hope we have in being with Him forever? Have you seen this hope in other people in your life?
- m) Was there anything else in the message on Sunday that stood out to you as impactful or challenging?

### **Take it Home (Optional Ideas for Response this Week)**

- a) This week, find time to pray that God would help you find hope through your relationship with Him above all else. Pray that He would help you to turn to Him for hope this season, rather than anything else in our lives (including Christmas celebrations, COVID-19 restrictions, etc.)
- b) This week, take a few minutes each day to pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ. Check in with a few friends to ask them how you can be praying for them, and bring these requests to God - knowing that He hears us and that He answers our prayers.

### **Optional Ideas for Prayer Time**

- a) In this season, it is important for us to be intentionally praying for each other. This also means that we must each choose to be honest and vulnerable with our prayer requests. Take time to 'check-in' about how each person is doing, and pray for them.

- b) As a group, spend a few minutes praying for our church community as they celebrate the Christmas season - pray for love, peace, hope, and joy, regardless of how different their celebrations may be. Pray that the true meaning of Christmas would be a central part of how we celebrate this year.