

SMALL GROUPS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Winter Semester - Week 5

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 ones that are not, and let the conversation flow naturally.

OPTIONAL ICEBREAKER(S)

- a) Have you ever experienced "deja vu"? What was that like?
- b) If you could re-live (experience again) one day of your life, what would it be?

PASSAGE AND DISCUSSION

Read Genesis 20

- a) What stands out to you upon first reading of this passage?
- b) How significant is it that we are presented with an unfiltered view of Abraham right after telling the account of Sodom and Gomorrah? What message is the author / God trying to make sure that we understand?
- c) Read **Romans 3:23**. What does Abraham's sin tell us about all of humanity?
- d) What was Abraham's motivation for lying about Sarah? What does that tell us about how he is viewing God at this point?
- e) In this passage we see Abraham acting out of self-preservation. When we make decisions, how often do you think of your own interests before those of others? Do you take others into consideration before or after weighing how you think you will be impacted?
- f) How does God show kindness to King Abimelek in this passage (see **v3-7, 17-18**)? What does this tell us about His justice and righteousness?
- g) When Abimelek asks Abraham why he lied, Abraham goes through a series of excuses. Read **v11-13**, and identify the excuses Abraham uses to justify his actions.
- h) Thinking through the excuses Abraham uses, how do we tend to use these same excuses today, to justify our own sin?

- i) Read **v13** and **Genesis 3:12**. How is blaming someone else making an excuse for sin? Why is this a poor excuse? How should we take ownership for our own sin?
- j) Explain the meaning of this statement, "Sin is inexcusable, but that doesn't mean it is unforgivable."
- k) We could read this wondering 'how could Abraham make this same mistake again?', but upon examining our own lives, could you identify times when you have repeated the same wrong pattern of thinking/acting? How have you seen patterns develop in the things we struggle with?
- l) Read **Proverbs 26:11**. What does this verse tell us about the sin nature of humankind?
- m) Read **1 Peter 5:8-9**. Who is tempting us to continue sinning against God? Why is this important to remember in our struggle with sin?
- n) **Read 2 Corinthians 12:8-10**. When we struggle often in sin, we are often relying on our own strength until we are exasperated. What do these verses tell us about resting in Christ, and leaning on His strength?
- o) **Read v7**. God calls Abraham a prophet - which makes him the very first prophet named in the Bible. What does it mean to be a prophet? What are some characteristics of prophets in the Bible?
- p) God calls Abraham a prophet - *after* his sin. What does this tell us about God's faithfulness and forgiveness?
- q) Read **Romans 8:28**. How does this story portray this reality of God's grace as described in this verse?
- r) Does God's blessing depend on our own righteousness? How does His unconditional love and blessing fly in the face of 'superficial Christianity'? How does this enable us to live in freedom from sin and shame?
- s) Read **2 Timothy 2:13**. How does this narrative reflect the faithfulness of God? How does this give you hope for your life as a child of God?

TAKE IT HOME (OPTIONAL IDEAS FOR RESPONSE THIS WEEK)

- a) Spend some time thinking about your own sin. What are some of the excuses you make to justify your behaviour? Examine the excuses, and take responsibility for your own actions.
- b) Think of the ways you try to control God with your actions or righteousness. Let go, and ask God to free you from the need to earn God's love, and blessing. And then thank Him that his love is not earned, but is freely given.

OPTIONAL IDEAS FOR PRAYER TIME

- a) Pray for the courage to be truthful and honest, even when we are afraid.
- b) Thank God for his justice, graciousness and faithfulness in your life.