

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



These discussion questions are designed to extend the impact of the Sunday message. You can use them for your personal Bible study, family study, and/or small group study.

Overview

Sermon: *Paul's Life Verse*. Bottom line: *Live to give*.

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

- Acts 20:35 (NIV)

Advent/Christmas points toward the birth of Jesus and his second coming. The way people usually celebrate Christmas is with exchanging gifts. You might be thinking of all the gifts you hope to receive. You may want better gifts than you received last year. Those desires can lead us to be short-sighted and selfish, only wanting things that are temporary and only finding happiness in what others give us.

The best gifts are not the ones you receive but the ones you give. It's true that Jesus coming into this world is the greatest gift that this world has ever received. Jesus is the better gift. When you receive the gift that is Jesus you will decide to give better gifts. The Better Gift is the one that's given.

The Apostle Paul knew this to be true because it's what Jesus both taught and modeled. "In everything" Paul did he lived by the words of Christ, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." You could say that this was Paul's life verse.

Discussion

1. Do you have a life verse, a word/phrase, or a piece of advice that you keep coming back to? Have each person share whatever it may be with another person in the group and then come back together and allow each person to share what they heard from their partner.
2. Read Acts 20. Describe the importance of encouragement in Paul's ministry? How can you give the gift of encouragement? Who might need that gift from you?
3. How would you describe being openhearted? How is Paul's relationship with his companions and the elders at the church in Ephesus evidence of his openheartedness? Where is your heart open? In what part of your life is your heart closed? How can you choose to not withhold your love?
4. How would you describe being openhanded? How was Paul openhanded? How is being openhanded helpful to those in need? What money and possessions are you holding on to that you need to let go?
5. Describe how Jesus is both openhanded and openhearted. What can you learn from him?

Application

6. Paul was passionate and principled. He lived to give. What principle makes you passionate about giving this Christmas season?

December 2, 2018