

Life Group – February #1

Welcome group members as they arrive and provide a few minutes for people share what is going on in their lives.

VIDEO: Play the video from Pastor Bob to introduce the topic. Remember, we are trying an experiment where the topic we are looking at is connected with a recent message from Pastor Bob on Sunday.

Read Chapter 2 of Daniel

QUESTION: When you think about living out your faith – do you think that feels more like taking a risk or more like being confident in what you believe?

QUESTION: Do you think it is possible to live in obedience to Christ without feeling like a lot is at risk?

QUESTION: What are some areas that you might feel are risky to trust Christ's leadership in?

QUESTION: Do you think it is possible to have some unshakable convictions about what you believe?

QUESTION: Have you ever had a strong conviction severely challenged? How did you get through that experience?

OBSERVATION: Daniel seemed to know what to do even when he was missing important information. When the order from the king went out to execute all of the wise men in Babylon, Daniel asked for more time. Sometimes you need more time to gain wisdom.

QUESTION: When you need wisdom, who do you generally talk to?

OBSERVATION: Multiple passages in Scripture support seeking wise counsel from godly people. They have learned many things as they have walked with God over their lifetime. Yet, Scripture does not suggest that we are to surrender our decision making to others. The wise thing to do – take the advice you have been given to God in prayer.

QUESTION: There will be times when you will not be able to find anyone who can provide the counsel you are seeking. What do you think would be a good strategy in that situation?

OBSERVATION: Daniel had clarity even when he was uncertain how things would turn out. He was clear about speaking with wisdom to the commander of the king's guard. He was clear in his request to the king. He was clear in his prayer to God. We should never confuse certainty with clarity.

OBSERVATION: It is a common religious trait to add rules to the commands that are already in the Bible.

QUESTION: What are some examples you can identify of religious groups or churches adding their own rules.

QUESTION: Do you think making up our own rules increases or decreases our influence in reaching our culture? Why or why not?

OBSERVATION: Jesus was committed to helping and healing people. He didn't seem to care what day it was. He would heal even on the Sabbath. In Jesus' day, the religious leaders had done a lot work creating new rules. There was a command forbidding work on the Sabbath. They felt they needed to define the word "work". They thought it was

okay to untie a rope on a donkey, but not to see a person freed from sickness or disease. We will lose our influence to reach lost people for Christ if our passion for rules is greater than our compassion for people.

OBSERVATION: God is not angry and He is not looking for a reason to nail us. Instead he allowed His Son to be nailed to a cross for us. God is not looking for reasons to punish us. He is looking for ways to bless us.

QUESTION: Do you think sin or righteousness is more contagious? If we are around sinners, are we more likely to sin or are they more likely to find Christ? Why do you think that is true?

QUESTION: Do you think there are things it is wise for a Christ-follower to avoid? Do you think it is possible to do that without creating new rules?

OBSERVATION: People will more likely respond to our decision to avoid questionable things if we describe it as a weakness in us rather than a sin in them. For example, "I would rather not do that because quite honestly I know if I were to start that in my life it could seriously affect me. In my family that caused a lot of pain in the past. If it's all the same to you, I'll pass."

This allows the option of living out our conviction without imposing it on another. It is speaking with humility rather than with condemnation. Humility influences, condemnation isolates.

PRAYER: Ask group members if there is any area they need God's wisdom in their life. Pray for each other – and ask God to grant them the time they need to receive this wisdom. Ask God to send wise and godly people into their lives. Ask God to grant them insight on what to do next – even if they cannot see all the steps now.