

# SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Numbers, Part 7  
September 10, 2006

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **It's the last week to register** for our Sharpen Your Leadership Skills at our upcoming 2-day Rock Church Leadership Conference - September 22-23. For more information or to register, log onto [www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/](http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/) or contact Andy Rodgers at [andyr@therocksandiego.org](mailto:andyr@therocksandiego.org).
- **Foundations in Leadership** - Have you been a leader in the past and interested in leading again? Are you curious about leading at the Rock? We are launching a new course, **Foundations in Leadership** that can help you answer some of those questions. This 8-week course is designed for small group leaders but it provides the basic tools to lead anything well. For more information or to register, log onto [www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/](http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/).
- **Ministry Fair** - Sunday, September 24, in the Youth Room. Peruse the many ministry booths to meet the ministry leaders, find out about upcoming events, and discover ways you can get involved.
- **For all other Rock Announcements** please go to <http://www.therocksandiego.org/announcements/> or see the Rock Event Calendar at <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/>.

## MEMORY VERSE

*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.* John 3:14

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – LIONS AND TIGERS AND BEARS

Last night I was hungry. And not just for “dinner.” I did not want Chicken casserole, leftover Chinese food, or a turkey sandwich. I wanted a steak. BBQ'd ribeye, seasoned with garlic salt and pepper, a baked potato with lots of butter, a fresh green salad and a big chocolate dessert. In my extreme hunger I was craving something specific – my taste buds were responding to a physical need. What I crave when I am hungry, as you can see, isn't always healthy (hence the baked potato with lots of butter.) Usually what I am craving tastes good going down, but then leaves me with a sick and less than satisfied feeling in my stomach.

It's easy to relate to hunger cravings – we are born knowing how to be sensitive to our body's need for nourishment. We know what it feels like to be hungry, we know what happens to our bodies when we don't nourish them properly, and we have structured our lives to meet this very basic need. We have access to food and information about the best way to satisfy our hunger cravings. While we might not always make the best choices in quenching our hunger, we seldom ignore the craving.

*Part of our job on this road trip is to grow more and more sensitive to the spiritual cravings we experience and grow in the discipline of meeting our spiritual needs in the way God designed us to meet them.*

Unlike our cravings for food, we are not as naturally sensitive or aware of our spiritual cravings and we often misinterpret them or ignore them altogether. This week Pastor Miles talked about one spiritual craving in particular – and that is the spiritual craving for approval. A spirit sensitive to our spiritual cravings can easily recognize when we begin to crave approval, and a mature spirit is able to make the decision to seek God's approval rather than the approval of people.

### Getting Started

1. One indicator of being spiritually hungry is when we feel a need for approval from others and we listen to them rather than the voice of God. Is there a particular area of your life that you seek approval from others? What areas do you feel less secure or confident?



2. Wanting support or encouragement from others is not necessarily wrong. However, when our entire spiritual diet is comprised of approval from people at the expense of obedience to God, we begin to starve. When was a time when seeking approval from people starved your Spirit and negatively impacted your walk with God?
3. On the other hand, when our spiritual diet is focused on obedience to and approval from God, we thrive. Do you have a personal experience of a time in your walk when this was the case?

### **Digging Deeper**

*Read Daniel 3:8-18*

1. What was the decree issued by King Nebuchadnezzar in this passage? What was the response of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? What was the punishment for their decision?
2. Part of denying the approval of others and being obedient to God is a firm belief that God works outside of what we can see or touch. Read Daniel 3:19-30. List all the things that King Nebuchadnezzar issued as punishment for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then list the ways God protected and blessed them in a seemingly impossible situation.
3. God's purpose in this passage was far beyond what Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego could have foreseen. It's easy for us to minimize the negative impact of our decisions when we seek approval from others. What do Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego teach us about the importance of how we meet our spiritual craving for approval?

### **Bringing it Home**

1. Matthew 6:33 gives us a command and a promise. How does this verse direct us in filling our spiritual cravings?
2. It is difficult and scary to let go of seeking approval from others. What is the promise in Matthew 6:33? Can you identify what drives your need to gain approval from others? How can you meet that need in a more spiritually nourishing way?
3. Needing approval from others only results in bondage. How do neglecting God's commands and serving others eventually place you in bondage?
4. What do you need to do this week to break free from that cycle of bondage and meet your spiritual cravings in the way God intended?