

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Numbers, Part 10

October 1, 2006

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- This month is **Pastor Appreciation Month!** It's as simple as picking a pastor, sending them appreciation cards, and being their prayer warrior. For more information, contact adoptapastor@therocksandiego.org.
- **Men's Retreat** - October 27-29, sign up online at www.therocksandiego.org/ministries/mens.
- **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

However, as it is written, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – MAPQUEST - THE CHRISTIAN VERSION 1.0

I consider myself a driven person. I have places to go, people to see, and things to do. And according to the news, media, and popular culture, not only is this a celebrated way of living life, it is not unreasonable for me to expect to "get there" faster, safer, and cheaper than I could last week. And why not? The process of getting there isn't the primary objective anyway, right? I want to get *somewhere* to do *something*. It's how I've been conditioned.

What's more, I'm finding that this way of thinking is not limited just to traveling from point A to point B. It's embedded into the way I naturally think about all the circumstances and opportunities in my life. I need to "get through it" or I need to "finish the project."

Can you relate to this kind of thinking? This week I've been wondering if this way of approaching life is one of the main reasons we look for shortcuts. Because faster is better and time is money. And while that's true of the world we physically live in, it isn't true of the place where we have our "spiritual" citizenship (Philippians 3:20). God doesn't care as much about time, money, safety, or convenience; He cares more about the journey. And He doesn't particularly like it when we try to avoid the experience by taking a short cut.

This week we are going to take a look at how we can reconsider the opportunities and circumstances in our lives in the context of our heavenly citizenship. We're going to realign the opportunities and circumstances of our lives from God's point of view – and hopefully think twice about taking that shortcut.

Getting Started

1. Take a minute to list some of the big things you're facing in your life at this point in time.
2. How would you define "success" for some of these things? When these circumstances have evolved into new circumstances, what do you hope to have accomplished? What would it look like for you to "get there" with each of these items?

Digging Deeper

3. Rather than simply completing tasks or arriving at our destination, what does John 15:4-8 tell us to do instead? How might this command add to our conversation about not taking short cuts?

4. The verses from John 15 are really focused on the act of “abiding.” To *abide* means to sojourn, dwell, encamp, or to remain. To “remain” is certainly contrary to “getting some place.” It certainly conjures up images of standing still. This can be very difficult for us especially given the expectations of our culture. Abiding, however, is one of the great mysteries of serving God - when we trust and abide, somehow things are set in motion that we can’t explain! Philippians 2:13-15 and 2 Corinthians 3:18 tell us there is more to life than getting from point A or point B or simply getting things done. What do these verses tell us about our purpose? What do these verses tell us about how we should think about the life-experiences presented to us?

5. Consider Psalm 138:8, Romans 8:28, Psalm 51:10, and Isaiah 64:8. What do these verses teach us about God’s primary objective for our lives? Consider the message of all four verses; what is most important to God?

6. Given God’s desire to transform us into His likeness, in your own words, how does God view our circumstances and opportunities?

Bringing it Home

Instead of viewing our circumstances or opportunities as something for us to endure, God views them as vehicles for transformation. He is not interested in us making it to the end as much as He is interested in us becoming more like Him.

7. How does the comment above redefine the way you consider success given the opportunities and circumstances in your life right now?

8. "David was the youngest son of a shepherd, but he became the greatest king of Israel. Paul ardently persecuted the early church, but he became the one who would spread the gospel to the Gentiles. Mary was an ordinary teenage girl who became the mother of the Messiah. There are times in our lives when things seem almost hopeless but God wants to use us all for great purposes. He does not look at our current condition, but at what we have the potential to become. We should view others and ourselves in the same way...We should try to view all things with the faith and hope that God can and will transform us into the people He wants us to be."

It’s just a hunch, but I would venture that the people listed in the quote above did mighty things in the Kingdom of God because they viewed life opportunities and circumstances as a catalyst for God to use in transforming them into His image.

Think again about one of those “big things” in your life right now. Pray together with your group (or one or two people from your group) about how God can transform *you* through that circumstance, rather than changing the circumstance or helping you “get it done.” Pray that God would give you the strength to not even look for a short cut!

Read Isaiah 55:8-9 and take comfort in the promise that God has your journey mapped out – and it fulfills a purpose you can’t even begin to imagine (Ephesians 3:20).