

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Turn, Turn, Turn
October 22, 2006

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Donation Drive for the Homeless** - We are collecting foot powder, lotion, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and deodorant to be given to the homeless at the Thanksgiving Outreach hosted by the San Diego Rescue Mission. Bring your donated items to church October 21 - November 12 and look for the San Diego Rescue Mission bins throughout the Sanctuary and Lobby. Please note: We are only accepting the listed items at this time.
- **Volunteer at the Thanksgiving Outreach for the Homeless** held on Saturday, November 18. Volunteer needs include food servers and outreach teams. For more info, go to www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/2274.
- **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/>.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – TURN, TURN, TURN

Fall is my favorite season. I love pumpkins, the color of the trees (well, the trees that aren't palms), the cooler mornings and evenings. I love the anticipation of the Christmas season and making fresh cranberry sauce for Thanksgiving.

To me, the change from summer to fall just feels good. And I am always inclined to savor the transition and take in all that this time of year has to offer. I am reminded of the verse in Ecclesiastes (and the infamous Beetle song) that assures us that, "There is a season, turn, turn, turn. And a time for every purpose, under heaven."

So as we take a break from the sermon series, I think it would be worthwhile to consider what God would like for us to understand about His character and design during this time of transition. Today, we focus on:

1. Recognizing how God imprints His promises and character traits in the changing of the seasons.
2. Considering how we as followers of God rely on His promises to enjoy and work through the seasons of our lives.
3. Analyzing if we are walking in God's "natural rhythm and order" for our lives.

Getting Started

1. I found this quote interesting: *Everyday life in Palestine was largely affected by that which was beyond the control of man, the seasons and the weather. In the yearly cycle, the four seasons are not as clearly marked as the lands to the north of it. But to the Jew every season was a special time and a reminder of the promises of God, as He said to Noah "seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter" (Genesis 8: 22).*

What might have been unsettling or freeing for the Israelites with the changing of the seasons?

2. In 2006, in San Diego, the seasons do not necessarily impact our lives to the degree they impacted the ancient Israelites – and yet we can anticipate seasonal (i.e. regular) changes in our emotional and spiritual lives. *What is unsettling and or freeing when we consider the natural changes that occur in our lives? How do you feel about change?*

Digging Deeper

3. Read Genesis 8:20-22. Jot down this promise in your own words:
4. The promise God made in this verse came on the heels of the world wide flood – when God destroyed the whole earth, “for the earth is filled with violence...” (Genesis 6:13). During the flood, the seasons of the earth were halted for nearly a year. Nothing happened as could normally be expected. Normally when we think of the sign of the rainbow we think of God’s promise to never flood the entire earth again. And that feels really good, but here we learn that the promise is deeper. *Why is it significant that God promised us that the seasons will change like clockwork every year? What does that tell us about God? What does that teach us about the way He wants us to live?*
5. Now, of course, that doesn’t mean that there won’t be any natural disasters or “uncharacteristic” happenings in the physical world. Remember Genesis 41:22-40? This is when Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s dreams and predicts a season of plenty and a season of famine. Just as Joseph told Pharaoh that there would be both plenty and famine, we need to remember that life contains both good and bad (i.e., plenty and famine). *What kind of season are you in; plenty or famine? What does that look like for you? How can we use our seasons of plenty to prepare us for our seasons of famine?*
6. In John 8:58, Jesus makes a statement about who He is. He says “I Am.” Here He is testifying to the “eternality of His being...” (NIV Study Bible Notes). He is declaring that while He is the one that set the seasons in motion and created the earth (and our lives) to be in a constant state of transition from one season to another, He exists outside of that predictable change. *How does the unchangeability of Jesus affect the way you view your season of life right now?*

Bringing it Home

7. Just as we can anticipate changes as we roll through the calendar year, we should anticipate some seasonal (or regular) transitions in our lives too. But in the midst of all that change, **God Is**, and He wants us to walk in the rhythm of His will. *What attributes or character traits does it take to “walk in the rhythm of God’s will”?*
8. Matthew 5 is home to the Beatitudes, or declarations of blessedness. Review verses 3-12. These “declarations of blessedness” are true no matter what season we are currently experiencing. Make a list of all the characteristics of a blessed life.
9. In some ways, the Beatitudes also serve as the litmus test of whether or not we are walking in the natural rhythm of God’s will. In other words, no matter what changes in your life, these statements will be true. Moreover, they function as a “how to guide” explaining what to do to walk in the rhythm of God’s will. *Based on these verses, what is God calling you to do right now?*
10. What can you do to stay connected to the truth of God’s unchangeability and love for you during your seasons of famine?