

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

MObedience MOmentum, Part 3

November 12, 2006

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Toys For Joy** - Can you donate new, unwrapped gifts for needy children this year? Or how about help at the Toys For Joy event on Friday, December 15? Drop off your toy(s) in the wrapped boxes dispersed throughout the church. To man a booth at the event, contact Mark Richardson at markr@therocksandiego.org or 619.226.7625 x293. For more information, go to <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/2320/>.
- **Calling all Women** - Please join the women of the Rock for a night of special music, a guest speaker, time to meet other women, and delicious dessert on Friday, December 1, 7 PM. Tickets (\$5) are on sale at the Rockpile or SISTERS on Wednesdays. For more information, go to <http://www.therocksandiego.org/ministries/womens/christmasevent/>.
- **For all other Rock Events**, please go <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/>.

MEMORY VERSE: *How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. Psalm 119:9*

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – SIN NO MO!

*Note - There is a lot of discussion material this week. We say this often but we want to remind you not to feel like you have to cover all the questions. **Discuss the questions that are most appropriate for your group.** One other thought, if you feel like you need two weeks on this lesson that's fine too. Blessings with this.*

It was a disaster. I hadn't received a formal invitation (it was lost in the mail) and had only spoken briefly with a friend of the hostess. I had an address and a time – and that was it.

I convinced my husband that he would enjoy an evening spent with other educators learning about our upcoming trip to Williamsburg, Virginia. So we mapquested the address, piled in the car, and set out on our way.

It turns out I had no idea what I was getting the two of us into. Mapquest took us directly to our location, the Rancho Santa Fe Country Club, where we nervously parked our car and made our way to the clubhouse. Neither one of us had ever been to a country club and we were feeling a little out of place. It didn't take long before we realized we were inappropriately underdressed and intuitively sensed that the evening would probably unfold nothing like we had anticipated.

We checked-in only to find that the friend of the hostess forgot to add our names to the list. The result: there was no place setting for us. Then, instead of being graciously greeted by the hostess, we met her only to find a look of horror on her face: "The dress code mandates a jacket and tie! Let me talk to the organizer to see if your husband will be allowed to stay for the evening." I was disappointed when they allowed us to stay.

It was one of the worst experiences of my life...and it didn't have to be that way. The entire experience could have been easily avoided. We just needed information to help us understand the context and the purpose of the evening and the right support to help make good decisions about what to do. And because of that, the evening was a bust. A waste of time. And, it was mortifying. We couldn't wait to leave the engagement, so as soon as it was appropriate, we bolted for the door. Believe it or not, it's still painful to look back on this experience. I'm not sure I've yet recovered from the embarrassment.

In many ways, confessing our sin is often similar to what I experienced at this doomed dinner engagement. Even though we know we are supposed to do it, and we know that it is necessary for obedience, seldom is looking back on our life and confessing our sin actually a beneficial or even uplifting experience. *I wonder if that is because we lack a context, a purpose, and the right kind of support needed for godly confession.*

Today in your group we are encouraging you to consider three things about looking back and confessing disobedience:

Consider:

1. The right *context* for confession.
2. The right *purpose* for confession.
3. The right *support* for confession.

God has commanded us to examine our lives and confess our sin before entering the Promised Land. In effect, He has asked us to look back, identify and change that which is not in line with His guidelines for Holy living. The act of looking back and recognizing our sin doesn't have to be paralyzing or horrifying. God wants us to grieve our disobedience, not be trapped by it. With the right environment, confession of past disobedience may be difficult, but in the end it should be empowering. After all, it's God's way of helping us learn how to live the life He created us to live!

I. **The Right Context for Confession: Understanding the Character and Heart of God**

1. When God gave the Ten Commandments in Exodus, He didn't just launch into a bunch of do's and don'ts. Read Exodus 20:2. What is the context God created regarding His rules for godly living?

God wasn't trying to say, "I led you out of Egypt, **so now you owe Me** your obedience." Instead, He was saying, "Remember!" Remember that it was Me who led you out of slavery and into freedom. How does that context change the discussion on obeying God?

2. Too often we repent out of guilty fear. Read Romans 2:4. What does this verse say about what should motivate our repentance?
3. Paul was in Athens when he was at a meeting of people who "considered themselves the custodians of teachings that introduced new religions and foreign gods" (NIV Study Bible Notes, pg. 1720). When he was with them, he was compelled to introduce them to

the one true God. Read what Paul said in Acts 17:24-28. What about God compels us to honor, follow, and obey Him? How does that impact the “context” for repentance? (Pay special attention to verses 27 and 28.)

4. The Bible does not glorify David, nor pretend that he was without sin. David’s shortcomings are made clear throughout the Old and New Testaments. You could say that David was familiar with repentance; looking back and turning from disobedience. Read Psalm 26:2-3. What does David say about whom God is and the process of examining our hearts?
5. *What motivates you to confess or repent?* How would you answer the question: How does understanding the character and the heart of God impact the way you think about repenting and obedience?

So given this context for repentance...let’s consider the purpose of confessing and repenting our sin:

II. The Right Context for Confession: Returning to a Loving Father

Wikipedia explains that repentance has three parts. It involves the changing of:

1. The way we **think** about something.
2. The way we **feel** about something.
3. The way we **act or behave**.

Read Luke 15:11-32. Take note of a few things like:

⇒ Son:

- How did the son change the way he thought, felt and behaved?
- What motivated this change?
- What did he know about his father that helped him change?
- What did the son expect from his father?

⇒ Father:

- When did the father see his son?
- What did the father do when he saw his son?
- What did the father say to his older son?

⇒ Situation:

- What did the son decide to leave when he returned to his father?
- What was the end result?

In this one parable from Jesus, we find the purpose of repenting: it's to come home...to return to what is best for us!

⇒ How has the world distorted our view of the purpose of repentance?

⇒ Do you sometimes get confused about the purpose of repentance? What thoughts enter your mind that keep you from repenting?

Let's recap:

The context: *The loving heart of our Father*

The purpose: *To return back to the arms of the one who gives us life*

III. The Right Support For Confession:

1. Read Hebrews 10:25. What does the author encourage the recipients of the letter to do? Why?

2. Isaiah 53:6 reminds us of our innate, human condition. What does it say?

So we all naturally will wander, and we will wander into things that will get us into trouble. We are born that way. Go back and review Hebrews 10:25. How does this fact impact the way we are to meet together?

3. Galatians 6:2 reminds us that we need each other, and we need to be there for one another. Galatians 5:15 tells us that our relationship with one another can easily have a negative impact. What do you expect of others when you share your own struggles? What should they expect from you when they share their struggles?

What is true of me?

This is one of the most important questions we can ask of ourselves. This week we encourage you to truly examine your life in the context of who God is and with the purpose of returning to a loving Father. We also encourage you to set up a time with one or two people from your group to meet together and share how you want to move forward in your walk with God. It's our desire that God will reveal to you those things that are getting in the way of experiencing His full blessing on your life and that you can look back and take giant steps forward.