

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

MObedience MOmentum, Part 6

December 3, 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/>.
- **For all other Rock Events**, please go <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/>.

MEMORY VERSE: *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.* Romans 1:20

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – CAN I GET A WITNESS?

May I be so bold by beginning today's study with a question? "What first comes to mind when you think of the word *witness*?" Frankly, that word can stimulate a lot of negative thoughts. Personally, I think of a long and inconvenient trial where I would have to relive a terrible event that I would like to forget. Then I would be called to retell the story while hoping that a jury would find my testimony credible. Even the mere thought of this scenario is incredibly intimidating!

Maybe when you hear the word *witness* your mind equates this term to an equally unpleasant word. You guessed it, that word is *evangelism*. Rebecca Pippert wrote in her book *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World*, "Christians and non-Christians have one thing in common: They both hate evangelism." Many Christians see evangelism as something they do to unbelievers. Whether it is a crusade or a sure fire evangelistic program (while very good, it's not complete), the goal of this kind of evangelistic activity is to recruit people into the Kingdom. Yet God has something much bigger in mind. He wants His people to become apart of the lives they touch.

In Numbers 17, God calls two credible witnesses (heaven and earth) to testify on His behalf to reveal His love, patience and ability to keep His promises. In the New Testament, Jesus becomes the final and key witness in this trial. Yet, instead of condemning those who rejected the plain truth, He loved them where they were without placing any expectation on them to respond to His love. He invested time and energy in men and women who were called *sinners*—those who would not have been acceptable companions of the religious leaders.

Getting Started

Most Christians interact with the unchurched everyday: co-workers, family members, neighbors and friends. These people are looking for truth in their lives. What is the state of your heart in regards to those who don't know Jesus? Let's start by answering the following questions.

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word evangelism?
2. Who was the most influential in your decision to follow Christ? What was the person's relationship to you (friend, relative, co-worker, teacher, stranger)?
3. What did the person do that influenced you?
4. How many times did you hear the gospel before you came to Christ?
5. How long did that process take? How many people were involved in the process?

Digging Deeper

In Deuteronomy 17:5-6, John 8:17-18, and 1 Timothy 5:19, it speaks of the power of two (corroborating) witnesses. Read Matthew 5:10, Acts 14:19-20, 2 Corinthians 11:20-29, and Hebrews 11:32-38

6. What do these witnesses have in common? Do these witnesses seem credible to you? Why or why not?
7. What are some of the attributes of a good witness? Based upon your answers, would you be a trustworthy witness for Christ? If not, what would you have to do to change?
8. Ask someone to read Luke 5:29-32 and another to read Luke 7:33-35. Why did Jesus spend time with these people who were considered *sinners*? What kind of activities did He do with these people? How did Jesus meet the criteria of being a good witness?
9. Why is friendship so important in reaching others? (Studies show that over 90% of those who come to Christ are reached by friend or family member.)
10. Read Acts 16:25-32. In this passage the Philippian jailer was open to the gospel because of his great need (he would be put to death if his prisoners escaped). Can you think of circumstances when people are more open to hear the gospel? Why do you think people are more open to Christ during times of change or crisis?

Bringing it Home

As Christians, it's natural for us to look ahead to the time when we will see Jesus face to face. And if the truth be told in that moment all of us want to hear the Son of God whisper in our ear, "Well done good and faithful servant." Despite this longing, one of the most difficult commands in Scripture is the mandate of being a consistent witness.

11. Write 3-5 names of people in your life who do not yet know Christ from the following categories: Co-workers, family members, neighbors and friends. When everyone has written down names, break up into pairs for a time of prayer. Ask God to give your group a heart to love and sacrifice for the lost. (Leader Note: Help your group understand that this time should not be totally focused on the names, but also on themselves.)

12. As a follow up to the previous activity, plan with your group some practical ways you can both individually and as a group show Jesus' love with the people around you (some suggestions: barbeque, Super Bowl party, Holiday celebration, take a meal to someone in crisis, help someone move, visit someone in the hospital, etc.).