

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

The Best Laid Plans of Mice and Men

November 05, 2006

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- It's the **last week to donate** to the Thanksgiving Homeless Outreach - You can donate foot powder, lotion, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and deodorant through this Sunday, November 12. These gifts will be given to the homeless at the Thanksgiving Outreach hosted by the San Diego Rescue Mission.
- **135 more volunteers are still needed** for the Thanksgiving Homeless Outreach held on Saturday, November 18. Volunteer needs include food servers and outreach teams. For more information or to sign up to volunteer, 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/>.

MEMORY VERSE: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.* Deuteronomy 6:5

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – THE BEST LAID PLANS OF MICE AND MEN

I had my Saturday all figured out. Get up early, spend a little time with God, go for a run and then on to IKEA. I was so sure that I could put the wall unit together before the big game. In fact, I was so confident that I invited my small group over to watch our beloved team win another game for fame and glory. Besides, I had just purchased my first HDTV and frankly, I wanted to show it off. The day started with everything going as planned. When I arrived at the store, I went straight away to the warehouse, only to find an enormous box that, with a great deal of effort, just barely fit into my SUV. Then, with the help of duct tape, bailing wire, and three IKEA employees we wrestled the behemoth into the back of my truck only to have a large portion of the carton protruding outside the back. Undaunted, and already running behind schedule, I chose the back roads and arrived at home safely only to realize that getting this “Titanic-sized” container inside my home by myself would be a challenge at best. I quickly reasoned that all I needed to do was to take the contents out of the box a piece at a time rather than trying to beg my neighbors for help. In the back of my mind I could hear a clock ticking, not a watch or an alarm clock mind you, but a giant grandfather clock complete with chimes to reinforce the feeling that my time was slipping--no, running away.

That's when I saw it. At first I thought to myself, “Why did they put a phone book in my box?” Yet, to my horror I realized it wasn't a phone book at all, rather it was the two million step-by-step instruction guide for my wall unit. Panic gripped me: “How could I get all this done?” “Should I cancel the party?” That's when it hit me. “Surely, there has to be some shortcuts to putting this thing together,” I said to myself. I quickly decided, due to my vast knowledge and experience, I could scrap the instructions and assemble this thing in half the time on my own. As you've probably have guessed by now, my decision turned out to be a nightmare. ***One thing that ordeal taught me is: Deep down in the core of my being I really, really hate being told what to do. I want to do things my way. I think I know best, yet every time I think I know better than God it always leads to big trouble.***

Last week we learned that the book of Deuteronomy is about ***how God prepared His people to enter the Promised Land.*** But not the kind of preparation you might think: battle plans, strategies, or to do lists; rather, these plans were aimed at teaching them how to live with God and each other within the land. In fact, the entire book of Deuteronomy is actually arranged in the form of an Old Testament treaty or covenant, or in other words an “instruction manual” for doing life together under God in His land. The book is set up like this:

Prologue: I have always been good to you so you should trust me and enter into an agreement.

Rules for Living: How you should behave.

Document Clause: Do not forget to study the rules.

List of Witnesses: Creation including people in the land who are watching.

Blessings and Curses: “What If” scenarios.

Recapitulations: Final - summary and warnings.

Getting Started

Remember: Don't feel pressured to answer all of these questions. Please choose ones that fit your group's specific needs.

1. Intended for the Small Group Leader: Take a few minutes to tell a story about a time when you made a decision to move outside of the will of God and acted contrary to what the Bible teaches. What was the result of your decision? Were there any repercussions? If you had a chance to do it again what would you do differently?
2. Now group members, can you relate a similar story and is your bad decision still affecting your life today? How?
3. In Deuteronomy 5:1-21, Moses repeats the Ten Commandments that God gave to the people 38 years earlier. Why do you think it was necessary to repeat the same rules all over again?
4. Look a little closer, how are these commands arranged? Can you see any kind of progression of how the law is presented? (Begins with the treatment of people to God and then people to people). Do you think this arrangement is significant?

Digging Deeper

5. In today's society there is great controversy over the displaying of the Ten Commandments. Why do you think these particular commands cause such debate? When you read passages such as these (Deuteronomy 5:1-21), how does it make you feel about God? Remembering that these “rules” were set against the background of God's goodness, what can we assume about these commands? (See Deuteronomy 7:12-15)
6. Look at Mark 12:28-34. Jesus summed up the entire law in two simple commands. What do you think Jesus meant by the statement referring to the scribe as being very close to the “Kingdom of God”? Do you think anyone can perfectly keep these two commands? What about keeping the Ten Commandments?

7. Why do you think that God required commitments that He knew His people couldn't keep? (Look at Romans 7:14-8:4.) How does the Law help us find and trust in Christ? (The law serves as a mirror into our lives and points out our desperate need for Jesus' forgiveness and salvation. See James 1:23-24 for a description of someone who looks into God's precepts and quickly discards them.)

Bringing it Home

8. Share a time when you've struggled with one of God's commands and ended up being obedient. What was the result? Do you have any regrets?

9. Deuteronomy 6:7-9 outlines how God wants His people to internalize His precepts: He tells us to teach His Word personally, practically and then publicly. Let's try to discover where we are in this process: are you personally studying God's Word? What's your next step?

10. What do you think it means to teach God's Word practically? How does teaching God's Word publicly help obedience?

Leaders: At this point it may be a good idea to ask your apprentice or someone in your small group if they would like to lead the discussion or a portion of the discussion in the coming weeks.