

# SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

## MObedience MOmentum, Part 5

November 26, 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](mailto:markr@therocksandiego.org) or 619.226.7625 x293. For more information, go to <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/2320/>.
- **Shimmer is this Friday** - 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:** *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." Galatians 3:13*

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – THE BLESSINGS AND CURSES OF GOD

No one can deny that there is harsh language in the Bible and, truth be told, some of that harsh language is aimed directly at us by God. Because of that it can be easy to think that God is nothing more than an angry judge, convicting or acquitting arbitrarily. If you get God on a good day then He will be gentle and kind, but on a bad day you better look out. But that's not the truth about God--He's not moody and arbitrary. On the contrary, what we see is that He is very intentional in His relationship with us.

What do you do with all that harsh language though? How do you get past it? How do you begin to see and understand the side of God that is also tender and gentle? If you didn't know any better, or if you didn't read closely enough, you could completely miss that part of God. I wonder if you've ever really experienced that "other" side of God. This week we are going to look at how the tough and tender parts of God come together. *So think hard with us about challenging some of your long held views of God.*

### Getting Started

One of the things I like to ask people is, "How does God feel about you?" Most of the people I talk to have never thought about that on purpose. But deep down inside, without even knowing it, they relate to God based on how they think He views them (i.e. His feelings for them). *Go ahead and spend some time thinking about this in light of yourself by...*

1. Meditating on the following question (think quietly about it and maybe even write out some of your thoughts):

- a. Which of these words do you think best describes the way God feels about you right now: angry, delighted, indifferent, pleased, tolerant, confused, exasperated, joyful?
  - b. Is there a word we missed, one that better describes the way God feels about you?
2. Why did you pick that word? Where do your thoughts about God's feelings for you come from?

### **Digging Deeper**

3. In 2 Corinthians 6:16-18 the apostle Paul talks about us separating ourselves from things that divide our loyalty to God. In a nutshell, he is talking about holiness. In the context of those verses, what metaphor is used for God? Based on that metaphor, what is the nature of our relationship with God?
4. Read the following verses and talk about some of God's feelings for us.
  - a. Psalm 68:4-5
  - b. Hosea 2:14-16 (What does this figurative language reveal about God's heart for His people?)
  - c. Hosea 2:19-20 (More figurative language)
  - d. Galatians 3:26-28; 4:6-7
5. So what is all the angry language about? Why do you think God speaks words of "cursing" to His people if He loves them so much? In other words, why would a loving God allow bad things to happen to His people? Why does God allow negative consequences in our lives?
6. Read Hebrews 12:4-8, 11 and talk about the role of discipline and consequences in the lives of God's people.
7. Read the following passage in Hosea (Hosea 11:1-9) from the Good News Translation. While you read this slow down, relax, and allow your mind to settle into the metaphor God uses for Himself and for us, His people. Try to feel what He is feeling and think what He is thinking.

<sup>1</sup>The Lord says, “When Israel was a child, I loved him and called him out of Egypt as my son. <sup>2</sup>But the more I called to him, the more he turned away from me. My people sacrificed to Baal; they burnt incense to idols. <sup>3</sup>Yet I was the one who taught Israel to walk. I took my people up in my arms, but they did not acknowledge that I took care of them. <sup>4</sup>I drew them to me with affection and love. I picked them up and held them to my cheek; I bent down to them and fed them. <sup>5</sup>They refuse to return to me, and so they must return to Egypt, and Assyria will rule them. <sup>6</sup>War will sweep through their cities and break down the city gates. It will destroy my people because they do what they themselves think best. <sup>7</sup>They insist on turning away from me. They will cry out because of the yoke that is on them, but no one will lift it from them. <sup>8</sup>“How can I give you up, Israel? How can I abandon you? Could I ever destroy you as I did Admah, or treat you as I did Zeboiim? My heart will not let me do it! My love for you is too strong. <sup>9</sup>I will not punish you in my anger; I will not destroy Israel again. For I am God and not a human being. I, the Holy One, am with you. I will not come to you in anger.”

- a. What does this reveal about God’s heart for His people and the discipline He deems necessary at times?
8. Now read Isaiah 30:19-21. What is God ready to do when we yield to His direction in our lives? Think now about the word picture in this passage. Imagine God walking behind you whispering directions in your ear. What has He been whispering to you? As a gentle “daddy” (Abba Father), what has He been asking you to do?

## **Bringing it Home**

Many people view God through the lens of earthly relationships. I grew up with a harsh father, so it was difficult to see God as anyone other than an angry bully. In fact, it took me many years to receive a more accurate image of who God really is. I had to “change out lenses” if you will. I had to choose not to view God through the lens of my relationship with my earthly father. I had to pick a more clear and accurate earthly lens through which to see God.

9. Are there earthly relationships that have shaped your view of God? How did you come to view God as a result of those relationships? Based on what we’ve read this week about God, is your view accurate? Do you need a “lens adjustment” to see God more clearly?
10. Is there anyone in your life (i.e. a friend, relative, leader) whom you can use to recalibrate your view of God? In other words, are there people in your life who act more like the God of the Bible? How can you use those relationships to more accurately relate to God?