

Growing Deeper – Part Two

Standouts - Then you will shine like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life –Phil 2:15

Week Four: *God-Directed Journey*

Luke 18:18-30

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. As we dig deeper into what it means to live a God-directed journey, we'll look at a man who seemed to desire just that. Read Luke 18:18-30. How did Jesus respond when the man called him "good"?
2. When you are Spending FIFTEEN, whether you're doing Growing Deeper or something else, do you ever read ahead to try to find an answer for a question for which you are uncertain? How does that affect your answer? (example: stifle your creative thinking or personal reflection)
3. It does not appear Jesus was concerned about steering the man toward a specific conclusion. He reminded the man of the full weight of the law required to be good, and stated that no one is good except God alone. How did the man respond to Jesus in verse 21?
4. Why do you think the young man still claimed to have kept the commandments in spite of what Jesus said to him?
5. If the young man actually believed that he perfectly kept the commandments, why do you suppose he would even ask Jesus this question in the first place?
6. Do you struggle with your inability to keep God's Commandments or do you feel you do a pretty good job? (see Exodus 20:1-17)
7. If we are going to honestly pursue a God-directed journey, a great place to start is by acknowledging our inability to do this on our own. End your FIFTEEN by confessing your failings at keeping God's Commandments. Ask God to help you recognize when you are straying from His laws.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Do you wrestle with the commandments God has given us? In other words, do they seem too restrictive? Do they take away your enjoyment or do they seem to serve a purpose in your life? Explain your answer.
9. Most of us consider the Ten Commandments as God's law. But the Jews in Jesus' day lived under a much broader list. The Mosaic Law had 613 commands, some very complicated. Skim though Leviticus 11-19 for just a brief look at some of them. How would you categorize these laws?
10. From our modern day point of view, some of the laws seem unreasonably harsh and excessive. However, if we think

about the difference between our lives today (i.e. refrigeration, air conditioning, antibiotics) and theirs, we can clearly see why there's no wiggle room in some of these laws. We know it can be deadly to come in contact with a little rotten meat, much less eat it! How might following laws of sanitary eating, hygiene and healthy relationships have made the Jewish people stand out amongst other cultures of their day?

11. Many of the cultures foreign to God's people had to think His people were crazy to abstain from what were likely common practices of the day. Perhaps they recognized in them a health and vitality that they did not experience themselves. Can following God's commands today have the same effect? Why or why not?
12. Some Christians today believe that following rules can attract others to Christ. Read Matthew 22:34-40. How does Jesus summarize the Law?
13. Now read 1 John 2:7-11. How does our light shine brightest? In your life, how does this love look, not just in theory but in practice? Brainstorm a list of ways you can show love to others.
14. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, pray that the love that you show others because of Jesus will draw them to Him.

Spend FIFTEEN: Day Three

15. Look again at Luke 18:18-30. The author Luke retells a conversation between Jesus and a "certain ruler." The same event is recorded in Mark 10:17-31, but Mark calls him the "rich young" man. By all accounts, the man is rich, young and powerful. Yet he comes to Jesus because being rich, young and powerful was not enough for him. Why do you think he wanted more? Have you ever felt the same as this man?
16. In both accounts, Jesus told the ruler that he still lacked one thing. What did Jesus say would happen if the ruler followed Jesus' instructions?
17. Mark includes a detail that Luke left out. What happened in Mark 10:21?
18. It is interesting to note that Jesus did not despise the man. He recognized his poverty of spirit in spite of his riches. Do we typically feel the same about the rich? Describe an example.
19. Read Ephesians 2:4-9. How are we saved? (vs. 8)
20. Scripture is clear and consistent; we are saved by God's grace through faith. This portion of scripture even says God displays the riches of His grace. Our salvation has nothing to do with our riches or lack thereof, so why might have Jesus made this particular command to this "certain ruler"?

21. One of the benefits of a God-directed journey is that it is very, very personal. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, ask God to give you openness to hear what He has to say to you.

Spend FIFTEEN: Day Four

22. Reread Luke 18:18-30. How did Luke describe the demeanor of the man? Why did he feel that way?

23. What example did Jesus use to describe the challenges of being rich?

24. Look again at verse 24. The young man originally asked about eternal life, but Jesus changes His phrase slightly. What does Jesus actually say it is hard for a rich man to enter in this analogy?

25. Jesus uses this term in an interesting way as He launches His ministry right after His Baptism. Read Mark 1:9-15. Who had come near?

26. The Kingdom of God is not as much a place as a person. It is the reign and rule of Jesus Christ. And that's not something that we have to wait for until we are in Heaven; it is available to us now. Why might the wealthy have trouble embracing the Kingdom of God when it is right in front of them, like this young man?

27. Wealth is not the only thing that keeps us from focusing on the things God would have us turn our attention toward. Maybe managing or acquiring money and possessions distracts you, or maybe it's something else. What things keep you from fully focusing on what God desires for you?

28. Finish your FIFTEEN by asking God to help you to focus on the things He cares about, rather than the things that steal your time and attention.

Spend FIFTEEN: Day Five

29. What is the most exciting thing that's ever happened to you? Have you ever won a prize, received an award, or escaped a near death experience? Describe that event and how it felt at the time.

30. Look again at Luke 18:18-30. In verse 26, we see the people around Jesus chime in with a question. How did Jesus answer them?

31. After Jesus reminds the crowd of the Good News, Peter can no longer be silent. One thing we know about Peter, he was impulsive, passionate and often first to speak. What we don't know is his tone. (If only the Bible included Emojis!) What do you think Peter meant by his statement? Was he looking for credit? Was he bragging? Was he implying if the disciples could do it anyone could? What do you think his intention was?

32. Then Jesus makes another promise in reply to Peter's in verse 29. What did Jesus promise? What does that mean to you? Does it sound like an easy, struggle-free life?
33. If we look at the example of impulsive Peter, we see an amazing God-directed story. By his own admission, Peter had given up everything to follow Jesus. But, by following Jesus, Peter witnessed and performed miracles. He saw the blind have their sight restored, lepers healed, the lame walk, thousands fed with five loaves and two fish, and miraculous catches of fish, just to name a few. Perhaps one moment may have trumped them all; a moment that came after Jesus' death and resurrection, after Peter had denied Jesus in His hour of need. Read John 21:4-19. Jesus took the time to reinstate Peter to his former role. Have you ever felt that kind of intimacy with God? If you have, describe how that feels. If not, what would it be worth to you to feel that?
34. As you finish your final FIFTEEN this week, consider all that it means to be on a God-directed journey. Is that what you want? Are you willing to trust that whatever the sacrifices required will be worth it to experience the Kingdom of God in your life now and in the age to come? If so, end by declaring so in prayer to God.