

The Basics: Gospel Life

Timeless Theme: Human's have a problem called *sin* which distorts our perspective and breaks our relationship with God. God demonstrates his love for us in that He takes responsibility for our problem, bears the weight of the consequence through Jesus' sacrifice, and offers us life again if we will receive it.

Curious Conversation:

1. Do you believe there is a root/shared issues all humans face? If so how does it manifest?
2. The bible says that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23a) both physical and spiritual. How does our world deal with physical death? Where do we see the effects of spiritual death?
3. Tonya said, "We are cheating on God?" Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
4. Romans 6:22b says Jesus is a free gift of eternal life from God. How does God's offer of eternal life deal with our problem of death?
5. Is the work of Jesus Christ (his death and resurrection) necessary for human salvation?
6. What have you been taught about repentance? Tonya said it was a change in mindset. What do you think she meant by that? How does someone repent of their sins to take hold of the life of God through Jesus?

Prominent Passages:

Ephesians 2:1-10, John 3:1-21, Romans 3:21-23 and Romans 10:8-13

The Basics: Gospel Growth

Timeless Theme: There is a whole life Jesus promises to give us if we will walk with him (John 10:10, Mark 8:34-38). The theological term is called sanctification which is the process of becoming remade into the image of Christ. Our life until glorification (when we will be made complete in His presence) is a journey of life long transformation.

Curious Conversation:

1. Consider the phrase “get saved.” Have you heard that before? What does it mean? How might this phrase stunt our understanding of the full purpose of the gospel to transform us?
2. What is our relationship with God now (John 1:12)? Why is the change in our relationship status vitally important to understanding our identity and the nature of how we relate to God?
3. Consider the terms position and condition. Our position is children, and our condition is that we still have a sin nature that is being remade. How does our position help us live beyond our daily sin condition? How does understanding our condition help us embrace the marathon we are running in this life?
4. What does surrender mean? What do we surrender to God? How do we take up a lifestyle of surrender?
5. Kathy listed several practices and resources at our disposal to live a transformed life. What do they mean? Which one(s) have you build into your life? Which one(s) do you need to consider pursuing?
 - a. Patience
 - b. Community
 - c. Prayer
 - d. Scripture
 - e. Serving/Giving
 - f. Worship
 - g. Sacrament (communion and baptism)

Prominent Passages:

Mark 8:34-38, John 15:1-17, Romans 8, Romans 12:1-2, Colossians 3:1-17, Hebrews 12:1-2

The Basics: Holy Spirit

Timeless Theme: The mystery of God is that we have one Lord who is three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While most Christians come to know God and Jesus early in their faith it is later down the road that they are introduced to the Holy Spirit who has been at work all along. The Holy Spirit is God's abiding presence with us in this life, the seal of our salvation, and the one who empowers us to be transformed. Understanding and walking daily with the Spirit is necessary for us to experience the power of God in our lives.

Curious Conversation:

1. What is your experience with the Holy Spirit? Before the video what did you know about Him?
2. What is your understanding of the Trinity? What do you make of the fact that Christianity believes in a God who is mysteriously comprised of three persons?
3. Read Matthew 3:13-17 and talk about the evidence of the Trinity in this passage.
4. How do the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together? Have you experienced this in your own life?
5. Talk about the historical moment known as Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13). What happened? Why did this moment change forever the experience of God's people?
6. Andrew said the Spirit dwells in you. What is significant about that? How might this ground our minds and inform our identities?
7. The bible talks about walking in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-24). What does that mean for our daily lives? What is in contrast in this passage? Now, look at Galatians 3:1-6, what does Paul rebuke the Galatians for doing? What does living by faith and walking by Spirit have to do with one another?
8. Take time to count all the ways that the Spirit benefits our Christian experience? How do we treat the Spirit like a person and not just a power?

Prominent Passages:

John 14:15-31, 1 John 5:6-12, Romans 8:1-11, Psalms 143:10

The Basics: Problem of Evil

Timeless Theme: Pain and suffering are unavoidable because everyone sins. Since human beings have become disconnected from their original intent on being image bearers of God we can't help but cause problems for ourselves and others. We live in a world that has both human flourishing and human depravity and learning how to suffer well is a place where we can experience Gospel life.

Curious Conversation:

1. How do you notice the "bentness" of humanity? Do you think this word is too strong or too weak to describe the human condition?
2. Do you agree that all humans (individually and corporately) have violated moral and natural laws? Do you think we are getting better, worse, or staying the same?
3. Why do we look to a higher power when we experience pain, suffering and evil?
4. Rob said that we have a perspective problem. We can only see things from our perspective and cannot see the whole picture. To what degree do you agree with Rob? How does our perspective problem cause greater struggle with evil?
5. In what way does suffering have meaning? Now, read Philippians 3:8-11, what eternal reason does Paul give for our suffering?
6. Have you considered suffering well versus poor? Rob said there are three things that can help us suffer well: Community, Perspective, and Hope. Discuss how Christians can access both and how each one can help Christians flourish in the midst of pain rather than shrivel?
7. Of those three which one have you found personally beneficial when you have suffered? Is there a time in your life that you have not suffered well?

Prominent Passages:

Genesis 3, Luke 9:22, Galatians 6:7, Revelation 1:12-16 and 22:6-21

The Basics: Scripture

Timeless Theme: God speaks to you. Most humans long to hear the voice of their maker and the Christian faith says that God does speak to us. The Word of God is spoken to us in the flesh (Jesus) and written (the Bible) and the diligent Christian must learn how to read and listen for His voice. Reading the Bible is challenging for all Christians, but for those who are patient and perseverant there is a treasure of knowledge and love to be found in hearing God speak.

Curious Conversation:

1. God speaks to us through the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit, and through other believers. Why do we need all three of these modes? What are the benefits and challenges of hearing God through these messengers?
2. The Word is Jesus in the flesh. Why does it matter to identify the Word who became flesh? How do the Scriptures and Jesus reveal God's will to us?
3. What do you know about how the Bible was composed? How familiar are you with reading it?
4. How does the Hebrews 4:12's description of the bible as "living and active" challenge the modern view of the Bible? In what way can it move, cut, and divide?
5. Are you encouraged or discouraged to hear Ken say that reading the bible is challenging? Does the difficulty of reading an ancient text create a barrier to you exploring? How can you manage this hurdle?
6. Have you considered your responsibility in cultivating a desire to read Scripture?
7. Ken listed several practical things to help us read the bible: 1. Be persistent and patient 2. Realize it is okay to have doubts 3. Start with the Gospels 4. Read and then put it into practice.
 - a. Which of these do are good for you to learn?
 - b. What is your next step in exploring Scripture?

Prominent Passages:

Genesis 1, John 1:1-18, Hebrews 1, Hebrews 4:12-13, 2 Timothy 3:16-4:5

The Basics: Church

Timeless Theme: Part of God's salvation is saving us into a family, a place where we belong. Where the western world has championed the individual, the Bible champions a community of faith. The more we can live part of and with God's family then we will experience the fullest expression of our salvation He intended for us.

Curious Conversation:

1. Do we need the church to grow in our faith?
2. What do you make of belonging to the church is a spiritual reality and not simply a personal choice?
3. Have you heard of the local and global church? What is encouraging and challenging about belonging to part of a global body?
4. Pretend you are moving to a new city. After listening to this conversation how would you go about finding a new church family?
5. Mutual participation is vital to belonging to any family. What does mutual participation mean for your role and contribution to Covenant? Your Community Group?
6. Ashley listed three things that are important in a local church: Gospel teaching, Gospel mission, and Gospel practice. Where do you see these things at Covenant? How about your Community Group?
7. Have you been (or are you currently) resistant to forming unified and intimate relationships within the church? Have you had to deal with experiencing hurt with church relationships? What benefits have you experienced working through tough relationships within the church?

Prominent Passages:

Exodus 19, John 17, Ephesians 4:1-16, 1 Corinthians 12, Revelation 3:7-13