

SIT TOGETHER:

Groups are intended to both deepen our love for one another and our love for God's Word. Give your group the time to catch up, chat, and naturally communicate. Organic conversations are best. Ice breakers are discouraged. If you see someone sitting alone, it is the leader's responsibility to sit with them.

STUDY TOGETHER:

Gather everyone together to begin the evening study. Explain the purpose of the four week study on "The Gospel for Everyday Life". As you spend your time together, a few reminders:

- Listen to how people define the gospel. If anything is added or taken away, lead them to define it correctly. Remember Colossians 4:6 and Ephesians 4:15.
- Don't be afraid to sit in the silence while you wait for others to speak. Give them time to think through their answers. Speaking too much will discourage others from speaking.
- Avoid telling personal stories that are off script. Continue to point people to the words of Scripture, not your words.
- Not everyone will speak into the conversation. That's okay. They will speak when they are ready.
- Give yourself plenty of time at the end to confess and pray. Don't rush this section but also be aware of how late it is. It's better to have time for people to have conversations afterward than to end and have to rush out the door.

PURPOSE: This study is intended to deepen our love for Christ by seeing our need for Him on a daily basis. The gospel not only saves us from our sins but saves us to a life of holiness. As we look to see our need for Jesus everyday, let's also encourage one another to remember the gospel.

Tonight, we will see from Scripture how the Gospel continues to transform us after we are saved and how beholding Jesus is better than behaving.

PRAYER: Before watching the video, reading the text of Scripture, or asking the questions, take time and pray with one another. If able, have the ladies pray with one another and have the men pray with one another. Have each group ask how they can pray for one another. Leader, after a few minutes, close out the time of prayer.

Introductory Questions:

QUESTION: What was your biggest take away from last week's session on "Getting the Gospel Right"?

ANSWER: Answers will vary.

QUESTION: What, in your opinion, makes a good Christian? What have you heard makes a good Christian?

ANSWER: Answers will vary.

Last week we looked at 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 as Paul teaches us the importance of remembering the Gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:1–2 [1] Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, [2] and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

QUESTION: What is the gospel?

This is the message of the gospel. The Gospel is the good news that a holy God sent us His sinless Son Jesus Christ who, through His death and resurrection, has graciously saved us from our sin, delivered us from eternal hell, and has called us to live holy.

The Gospel message is the past, present, and future work of Jesus Christ in our lives. Remembering the gospel is necessary not only in remembering what Christ has done for us, but what He continues to do in us.

VIDEO: Watch the video, "Beholding is Better than Behaving". (11:57)

The Scope of the Grace of Jesus:

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

Titus 2:11–15 [11] For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, [13] waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [14] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. [15] Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you. (ESV)

QUESTION: According to Titus 2:11-12, what has the grace of God accomplished and what does it continue to do today?

ANSWER: The grace of God has brought salvation to all people and it continues to train us to renounce sin and live holy.

This text again gives us the scope of the gospel. The grace of God has appeared. This grace is Jesus. This Jesus is doing two things:

1. He has brought salvation to all people.
2. He is training us.

QUESTION: Why is the order of the work of grace in Titus 2:11-12 important?

ANSWER: The focus of the gospel begins and ends with Jesus. If it first begins with us, then we have missed it.

This is the ongoing work of Jesus in our life. This is what Paul refers to in 1 Corinthians 15 as the gospel continues to save. **Living in complete dependence on Jesus IS the Christian life.**

Acts 17:28 for “‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’ (ESV)

Philippians 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (ESV)

Beholding Jesus:

Now, notice the order here in Titus 2. Jesus comes to bring deliverance first, then grace trains us to live obediently. We must not first seek to do in order to be. We must first see our position in Christ before we focus on the practical. **The fruit of our lives is the outward showing of an inward beholding.**

2 Corinthians 3:12–18 [12] Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, [13] not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. [14] But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. [15] Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. [16] But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. [17] Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. [18] *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are*

being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (ESV)

In this passage, Paul is showing the deficiencies in the law. It veils the hearts of mankind. It cannot save us. It shows us our sin and how we have fallen short of God's glory. It is not intended to empower us to obey. There is insufficient glory in the law of God to empower us to obey it. You cannot get power to obey the law from the law itself. Power to change can only come from the glory of Christ! There is nothing deeper than the glory of Christ! Paul says to stop looking at the law to learn how to behave and begin beholding the glory of Christ.

We think we know what will do the job of making us holy: us doing the job making us holy. And seeking holiness is integral to discipleship. But more central to our discipleship is the news that actually makes Christianity Christianity: we are holy not because of what we've done but because of what Jesus has done. This is why the good news is so good! The essential message of Christianity isn't "do" but "done!"

This is why Paul tells us, **beholding is better than behaving.**

Beholding Christ's glory is the number-one directive for following Jesus. And, in fact, it's sometimes the only effort we lousy disciples can muster up. Sometimes we are so busy trying to do great things for God that we forget to look at his glory and therefore never quite behold it.

Matthew 15:8-9: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me."

For Jesus, this worship amounts to zero. That is what "vain" means. "In vain do they worship me." Zero. It is not worship. This is a zero worship. It is zero if there is no heart dimension to it. So, you can do as many deeds as you want and go to as many church services as you want and never be worshiping if it is all external and nothing is happening in your heart toward God. All true worship is in essence a matter of the heart. It is more, but it is not less.

QUOTE: "True worship is a valuing or a treasuring of God above all things." - John Piper

QUESTION: Why do we tend to put so much emphasis on behaving rather than on beholding? Discuss amongst your group.

ANSWER: Questions may vary, but the answers should point to our sinful desire to make ourselves right.

QUESTION: What do you think it looks like to “behold Jesus”?

ANSWER: Answers may vary, but beholding Jesus is what true worship of Jesus really is.

Sanctification in the Life of the Believer:

John 15:1–11 [1] “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. [2] Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. [3] Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. [4] Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. [5] I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. [6] If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. [7] If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. [8] By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. [9] As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. [10] If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. [11] These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. (ESV)

This text really demonstrates the beautiful doctrine of sanctification.

Sanctification simply means to make holy. Two aspects of sanctification: positional and practical.

POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION: This is when you become a Christian. You are declared holy.

QUESTION: How is our positional sanctification in Christ seen in the text from John 15?

ANSWER: John 15:5 - The branch (the believer) is connected to the Vine (Jesus)

John 15:5 [5] I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (ESV)

The word abide is a word that means to remain connected to, to dwell in. This word is not a one time visit to Jesus. It's literally dwelling in his presence at all times. Abide in me simply means to continue daily in a personal relationship with Jesus.

Throughout the New Testament, we see God's Word constantly calling out our identity. We are in Christ, united with Him. No saving good, no eternal good, no God-exalting good, no soul satisfying good comes to us except as we are connected to Christ. Here's how we abide in Christ. We abide in Christ when we are aware of our daily need for Him and believe that apart from Him we can do nothing. Without the power of Christ, there is no life.

QUESTION: How often do you consider your need to abide in Christ? Why is this fundamental doctrine essential to our daily lives? Discuss amongst yourselves.

PRACTICAL SANCTIFICATION: This is the process of becoming like Christ. You are becoming holy.

QUESTION: How is our practical sanctification in Christ seen in the text from John 15?

ANSWER: John 15:5 - The branch (the believer) that is connected to the Vine (Jesus) produces fruit (Galatians 5:22-24)

It's through the sanctifying power of Jesus that produces Christ-like fruit in our lives. What is fruit?

Galatians 5:22–24 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. [24] And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (ESV)

QUESTION: How has Christ changed you since He saved you? What fruits do you see in your life that He has produced in you? Discuss amongst your group.

Titus 2:11–14 [11] For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, [13] waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [14] who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (ESV)

QUESTION: Knowing now that beholding Christ is better than behaving, how does Titus 2:12 help us in our fight against sin?

ANSWER: Beholding Christ produces a heart of confession and repentance (Titus 2:12)

Rounce ungodliness and worldly passions (TURN AWAY)

Live self controlled, upright, and godly in this present age. (TURN TOWARD)

QUOTE: Be killing sin or sin will be killing you. - John Owen

1 Peter 1:14–16 - As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, [15] but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, [16] since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." (ESV)

QUESTION: Knowing we are forgiven and we are in Christ, are we free to do as we please?

ANSWER: No! Grace is not a license to sin!

Romans 6:1–2 [1] What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? [2] By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

SHARE TOGETHER:

As you close out the group for the evening, take the time to have people share what is on their hearts. This is the time to take prayer requests, confess sins, and pray for one another. Encourage other people in the group to pray.

QUESTION: What sins do you need to confess?

James 5:15–16 [15] And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. [16] Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. (ESV)

ANSWER: Answers will vary.

QUESTION: What measures can you incorporate in your life to fight your sin? Discuss amongst your group.

ANSWER: Answers will vary.

QUESTION: What difference would it make if you applied the truth and power of our union with Christ to our pursuit of holiness and our fight against sin? Discuss amongst your group

ANSWER: Answers will vary.

GROUP PRAYER - Pray as a group that God will open your eyes further and further to the greatness and sufficiency of the Gospel.

Text: John 15:1-11

Title: Beholding is Better than Behaving

Study: The Gospel for Everyday Life

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Session 2

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The Scope of the Grace of Jesus:

Read Titus 2:11-15

QUESTION: According to Titus 2:11-12, what has the grace of God accomplished and what does it continue to do today?

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Beholding Jesus:

Read 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

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