

Small Group Discussion

PART IV Forgiveness November 26-27, 2011

Group Leader: This week Vern covered the book of Job and anger with God. He spent some time on the issue of the value of anger in our walk with God and mentioned that while he believes that anger with God in suffering is accusing God of wrong-doing and is wrong, he acknowledged that some believe that anger expressed toward God in suffering is legitimate, even necessary. This week the Small Group discussion will grapple with the counter view of handling anger with God in suffering. The outcome, which ever side your group settles on should be the growth in relationship with God through the difficult circumstances in life.

Getting Started

At some point early in a marriage the bride and the groom begin to realize that the person they married isn't the person they **THOUGHT** they married. Disappointment creeps in, but ultimately there comes a time when both bride and groom must decide to throw out the dream-person they wanted and accept the person that they got.

All relationships go through a process of transitioning to a relationships that is more real and away from the relationship we expected.

Do you relate to hitting a stage of disappointment with a relationship? Give an example of moving from an unrealistic expectation of a person (spouse, friend, parent) and how you moved past that to a more real relationship.

Job's Relationship With God:

READ: Job 1:8-11; 2:4-5

How does Satan describe Job's relationship to God?

GL – One Pastor defined what Satan accused Job of being “a paid lover” of God.

If Satan says that Job only worshipped God because if he did it would make his life better, what do you think it would take for you to get angry at God?

READ: Job 1:12, 20-22; 2: 6, 9-10

Small Group Discussion

What was God's reason for granting permission to Satan to test Job and what was Job's original response?

Job never was told of this discussion in heaven, but it introduces the book. Based on this information, why was Job tested? Are you comfortable with that reason?

Struggling With God

READ: Genesis 32:22-32

The author says that Jacob wrestled (*ye'abeq* in Hebrew) with Jacob (*ya'aqob*) by the Jabbok (*yabboq*) – the author uses wordplay here to help the reader remember the details of the story.

As Jacob prepares to meet his brother, Esau, who appears to be on the warpath against Jacob, prepares for his final scheme. Jacob's name means "schemer," and he spent his life plotting to get his way from his brother (by stealing the birth-right), with his father by deceiving him to gain his brother's blessing, with his father-in-law, Laban. Finally, as he prepares to return to the land promised to him by God, he discovers that in all his scheming his struggle was with God. This is the story of how the nation got its name in their forefather, Jacob. He spent an evening wrestling with God in what appears to be a difficult battle. Jacob won't quit until God blesses him, which he does by giving him the name of the new nation that would come from him. Jacob means "strives with God" and overcame, Israel means "strives/wrestles with God and overcame."

*When God chose a people to walk with Him and to represent Him in the world, what was the characteristic He marked them by represented in their name, Israel? **A nation that would strive/wrestle with people and with God.***

Genesis 1-2 tell us that God made people for a relationship with Himself and with one another. If relationships involve the merging of two individuals, why is conflict inevitable?

READ: Ephesians 4:25-27

*While the author of Ephesians 4 tells us that anger is a legitimate emotion, but what does he say will turn that legitimate emotion into a weak-point that Satan will exploit? **Un-resolved anger.***

Small Group Discussion

Philip Yancey says in his book, *Disappointment With God*, that most people experience disappointment and anger with God and dis-engage (stop talking) with God. Job never disengages, but continually asks for an audience with God. If we believe that anger with God is sin, we will tend to abandon God without going through the difficult process of experiencing God in troubles.

The argument of Job's friends is that the only reason that God allows the misery Job has is because of a person's unrighteous deeds. Job responds to his friends that that isn't always true. What begins with self-defense to his friends turns to an appeal for an audience to God to defend himself. This was the argument of God of Job to Satan in chapters 1-2

READ: Job 31:35-40

What is Job's complaint about God in this passage?

Where does Job go wrong in his anger with God based on this passage?

The Resolution of Conflict With God

Whether you conclude that anger with God is part of a growing relationship with God or a hindrance to that relationship, at some point you must decide if you will trust God with your life or if you can do better without Him.

READ: Job 42:5-6

What is Job's conclusion from God's meeting with him?

*What things did Job speak of that he could not understand? **Likely it was the "why" question of suffering, based on the introduction of the book (God's conversation with Satan).***

*If Job 42:5 is the message of suffering to Job, what was the benefit to Job from this experience? **Job experienced God in a deeper way, without ever getting an answer to why he suffered.***

What lessons do you learn for your difficulties and walking with God in it?

Small Group Discussion

Recommendation: The key verse for Forgiveness is ***“Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.” (James 1:19–20, NLT)*** Ask the group to memorize this verse and claim it with their choice to grant God’s forgiveness to the person or offense.

Check out the Unburdened website that will help you through this series at www.unburdened.me The Resources page has some extra help in the category of Anger with God.