

HOME GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

History (Making it Personal)

1. Talk about the nightly "bad news" report - list the top 4-5 categories of stories that pre-dominate our headlines. The people and locations may change from day to day - but certain themes repeat themselves - what are they?
2. Have you known people who've walked away from "faith" because of evil or suffering in the world? How do you address their concerns? What hope does scripture give us? Should we expect ONLY blessing from life?
3. Walking through hard times will make us better or make us bitter...what determines the outcome?

Digging Deeper (Looking to the Bible)

4. Read Revelation 6 & 8:1-5 in regards to the seven seals:
5. What are your first impressions on reading this text - what stands out to you - what causes you questions - what promises do you see?
6. The first four seals deal with the common currency of life "this side of eternity." Conquest, war, famine, and death seem to occupy most of our history books. There are two kingdoms clashing here. Read Colossian 1:13-14 and talk about the two empires we see at work.
7. The fifth seal gives us a glimpse into the passion and cry of the saints - How long O Lord!? Read Psalm 13; Exodus 3:7-8; & 2 Peter 3:9. Talk about the "delay" of God and how we should view the present evil in the world.
8. Now read the greater context of 2 Peter 3:1-18 and talk about the kind of lives we are called to live in the midst of a corrupt world.
9. Matthew 10:34-39 talk about the conflict that the kingdom of God stirs up in human relationships. Conquest, war, famine and death are ultimately the result of spiritual rebellion against God. Where does the believer turn to find strength in the face of these realities? Why was it so critical for John to write chapters 4 & 5 first?
10. Chapter 8:1-5 paints an incredible scene of the prayers of God's people being lifted as incense - think this through! The prayers are lifted from earth, they are purified by fire in heaven itself - and then they are turned back on the earth to accomplish the plan of God! Peterson calls it "reversed thunder!" Have we taken too lightly the "cry" of God's people and what affect it can have on the daily affairs of life?
11. With the massive weapons of the "empire" against them - the devout band of first century believers needed to know they had the greater resources of prayer and spiritual warfare as they stood in the gap. Talk about the power of prayer - and why we find it so difficult to step into a consistent and earnest life of prayer.

Taking It Home (Application)

12. As you close off your study - take some time for praying prayers of battle and conquest. Acknowledge that we are in a spiritual war-zone with two empires that are clashing. The reigning ruler of the universe is indeed on the throne - but there is a cosmic battle being waged against all that is beautiful. Stand in the gap for each other.
13. Pray that the glory of God would be revealed in our world, even in the face of, and perhaps especially in the face of the uncertainties so many are facing these days. As all the "props" of economic stability are removed - people will begin to look for other areas of comfort and strength. What an opportunity for the people of God. The question is this however - is Christ REALLY our anchor - or are we in just as much of a panic as the world around us!?



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When Empires
Collide!