

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

Without Excuse

Romans 1:18–20

Consider the following quote:

"The gospel is what makes us right with God (justification) and it is also what frees us to delight in God (sanctification). ... As my understanding of my sin and of God's holiness grows, something else grows: my appreciation and love for Jesus. His mediation, his sacrifice, his righteousness, and his gracious work on my behalf become increasingly sweet and powerful."

~ Robert Thune and Will Walker, *The Gospel-Centered Life*.

The gospel frees us to not have to make excuses for our sin. Instead, we can acknowledge it, trust that Jesus' work and sacrifice is enough for us, and live honestly and transparently with others.

Questions:

1. Pastor John talked about how we are all prone to making excuses for our sin and blame shifting instead of acknowledging it and owning it. Of late, which of the following tendencies to minimize sin do you notice in yourself and how does Jesus/the gospel free you to not need to do that?
 - Defending yourself or your intentions.
 - Faking an external image of having things put together.
 - Hiding your sin.
 - Blaming others or the circumstances for your sin.
 - Downplaying your sin.
2. When you are in conversation with someone who does not embrace the gospel and you notice they are suppressing the truth or rationalizing away their behavior, what are ways you can engage them with the truth spoken in love? Are you more likely to not share the full truth with someone or share the full truth unkindly?
3. Pastor John talked about different aspects of creation that give evidence for God's existence. Talk about the idea of blind faith vs. reasoned faith:
 - Which type of faith does God expect us to have (Acts 17:2, 7, 17; Eph 3:4, 2 Tim 2:7)?
 - How is it going with engaging your mind in your relationship with God?
 - How is it going with living by faith – believing God is real and His promises are trustworthy though you cannot see Him (Heb 11:1)?
4. Among the various religions in the world, Christianity alone offers salvation by grace and not works. What is an aspect of the gospel or implications of the gospel that amazes you right now? Who can you share that truth with this week?