

SCRIPTURES FOR 2/26/06 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Genesis 3:8

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day...

Genesis 4:3-5, 8

In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast... Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Psalms 51:16-17

You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

John 2:19-22

Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

Isaiah 1:16-17

Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

<p>NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed</p>

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

INTRODUCTION:

This week, we learned that history displays a narrative to explain what worship has been, what it could be, what it is now, and what it will one day become, and that narrative should impact the way we worship today.

Have someone read Genesis 3:8.

PERFECT WORSHIP

It seems like it should have been easy to worship and obey God when He was so close and tangible.

Why do you think God was shielding Adam and Eve from the knowledge of Good and Evil?

Why do you think they listened to Satan instead of God?

Have someone read Genesis 4:3-5, 8.

This was the first major disagreement about worship styles.

Have you ever felt jealous about God's apparent favor going to someone else?

Why do you think the "worship wars" continue to rage to this day?

TEMPLE WORSHIP

God only set up one rule in the beginning, but once we sinned and broke off our perfect communion with God, He made a whole list of new rules for us.

Do you think God thought more rules would work where few rules didn't?

Why do you think He made so many rules?

If God is omnipresent (everywhere at the same time), what is the purpose of the Holy of Holies?

Have someone read Psalm 51:16-17.

In this scripture, it seems like God is giving permission to ignore the rules in favor of something else. What do you think He meant by that?

JESUS AS TEMPLE

Have someone read John 2:19-22.

How does this scripture affect the way the first-century Jews, and we today, worship?

So, now that Christ lives in us and we can "approach the throne of grace with confidence" not needing a high priest to intercede or an animal to sacrifice, what is expected of us?

Have someone read Psalm 51:16-17 again.

What do you think David means by "broken spirit?"
"Broken and contrite heart?"

Contrite literally means, "grieving and penitent for sin or shortcoming" – we must grieve where we fall short. And we can start by following God's advice through Isaiah:

Have someone read Isaiah 1:16-17.

So we must discard our pride, grieve for our sin, and help the less fortunate and then we can begin to experience a bit of restored communion with God.

Give some specific suggestions for seeking justice, taking up the cause of the fatherless, encouraging the oppressed, and pleading the case of the widow.

How can we do this better as a LIFE GROUP?

IMPERFECT WORSHIP

We had perfect worship in the Garden of Eden, and we will have perfect worship again in Heaven, but in the meantime, we must struggle to figure out what the Spirit wants of us. This is why we must "work out our salvation with fear and trembling"; our imperfect worship is a journey and what we learn on the way is God's thumbprint on our lives. Relish the journey.

OPTIONAL RECOMMENDED ACTIVITY:

Find the areas in the Christian Life Profile where your members' needs overlap and discuss a couple of concrete things that can be done to work on these areas over the next six months or so. If you go to the Pantego Bible Church website

(<http://www.pantego.org/resources/30core.html>), you will see a list of resources that address all 30 of the core competencies. You can order them through the church or look in our library for that resource (or something similar) and start being intentional and accountable about improving spiritual disciplines within your group.