

Home Group Leader's Notes

Week of April 28, 2019

FOCUS FOR THIS WEEK: This week's focus is on the character of God and how this relates to the afterlife.

SHARE

What would someone say about you, 'That's how he/she rolls?'

NOTES TO LEADERS: The purpose of this "share" question is to illustrate that actions follow character. Therefore, when people say something like, 'That's how Steve rolls,' they are saying that my actions follow my character. This means that God's plans for the 'after life' are contiguous with His character.

LEARN

This series looks at what God has revealed about what happens "After this life." This week, we will look at the character of God and how this shapes our eternal future.

What do we learn about the character of God in each of the following passages?

Psalms 5:4; 92:15; 119:37 [**Note: this should be 119:137**]

NOTES TO LEADERS: Each of these Scriptures reveal something(s) about the character of God. For example, Psalm 5:4 reveals God's displeasure with wickedness. 92:15 reveals that God is "upright" and has no wickedness in Him. Psalm 119:137 reveals that God is "righteous" and "right" in His laws.

Romans 9:14

NOTES TO LEADERS: God is just

1 John 1:5; 4:8

NOTES TO LEADERS: God is both light and without any darkness AND He is love.

How does God view sin and evil?

NOTES TO LEADERS: God hates and will punish sin. Those who continue in their sin will not enter the kingdom of heaven and will suffer the wrath of God. For believers, Jesus suffered the wrath of God - He took on our punishment.

Isaiah 13:11; 59:2; Romans 1:18; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-6

What do we learn about God's plans and desires in the following verses?

Romans 5:8; 1 Timothy 2:1-4; 2 Peter 3:9

NOTES TO LEADERS: From the beginning, before creation, God planned to send His Son, Jesus. He loved us and acted to redeem us even while we were yet sinner. He also desires that *“all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth”* and *“he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*

DISCUSS

Why is God’s hatred of sin difficult for us to discuss? Would we want Him to be different?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Sin is almost taboo topic in America. The ‘word of the year’ last year was “post-truth,” an appeal to emotion that disconnects us from facts. The topic of sin makes us ‘feel’ bad and is therefore difficult to discuss. This is like the response of Adam and Eve who wanted to hide from God. If the only options in the topic of ‘sin’ are judgment, condemnation and wrath, then we would all ‘hide’ from the topic. But what if there is good news available? What if there is now “no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus?”

The second question asks if we would not want God to hate sin? Would we want a God who was OK with sin?

1 John 4:8 declares that “God is love.” Would ‘God be love’ if He didn’t judge sin?

NOTES TO LEADERS: This question is connected to the first. Would God be loving if He didn’t condemn and judge sin?

How is Exodus 34:6-7 a summary of God’s character? How is His character connected with heaven and hell?

NOTES TO LEADERS: These verses are God revealing Himself (as promised to Moses in 33:23); these verses are God talking about God. He reveals that He is ...

- Compassionate toward us, knowing our condition and need
- Gracious, slow to anger, abounding in *“Chesed”* (lovingkindness toward the needs of people)
- Forgiveness (Lit. “to lift or carry” the burden of guilt) for all three categories of unrighteousness. *“Wickedness”* = to turn aside from what is right or good, *“transgression”* or *“rebellion”* = willful violation of the terms of the covenant and thus betraying the relationship with the King, and *“sin”* = any kind of moral failure.
- This is, then, is the character of God as revealed to Moses (and now us). Notice that God is both gracious and just.

Praying that our glorious God is exalted,

Steve