

Life Group Preparation Notes

“The Good Father” Father’s Day

Grant Stevenson - Sunday 18 June 2023



Note for the facilitator: This past Sunday we celebrated Father’s Day and Ps Grant Stevenson from Southside Church, Sun Valley brought God’s word. He highlighted an important point about belonging and our relationship with God; it’s about knowing God intellectually (head knowledge) and then also about knowing him intimately through experience. This happens through observation and using our senses and has a much deeper meaning.

Worship and check-in: During worship in your quiet time or group, listen to [“This is Our God” by Phil Wickham](#). This song encourages us to remember all that God has done for us. That He loves us, saved us, endured the cross for us, and then beat the grave. Take time to give Him thanks for all He’s done in your life and proclaim Him as your God. **Share with the group as part of your check-in; What action you took during the past week towards BELONGING or encouraging others to BELONG.**

Bible Readings: John 15:15; Revelation 2:2-5; Proverbs 23:7; Luke 7:47; Romans 8:15; 1 John 4:19; Luke 23: 42

Preparation and Discussion for Group Time:

Ps Grant carefully explained to us that even though we understand that we need to know God in our minds as well as in our hearts, it doesn’t prevent us from drifting into isolation. Gaining knowledge can so easily overtake the experience and meaningful relationship we have with our father. This can then result in separation from Him even though we’re “doing” all that a Christian is supposed to do.

1. As you read Revelation 2: 2-4 where Jesus addressed the church in Ephesus; He acknowledges their hard work and perseverance but also accuses them of ‘departing from’ (losing) their first love. Ps Grant explains that although they knew God intellectually and were doing all the right things, their hearts became disconnected. The problem of continuing a relationship with God based only on intellectually knowing Him is that the enemy can attack you there (in your mind). He steals your identity by planting thoughts such as: You’re not a friend of God but a foe, You’re not a child of God but a slave.
 - Share with the group a time when you were plagued by thoughts of not being connected to God or you are currently experiencing an intimate disconnection from God although you have/are still serving Him fully.
 - Vulnerably share with the group what this was like and what you did or what can you do to reconnect with Him intimately. Also, refer to Revelation 2:5
2. As we celebrated Father’s Day, Ps Grant reminded us that we don’t have to do anything to earn our place of belonging with God and that He loves us unconditionally love.
 - Has your view of God been negatively or positively impacted by your earthly father’s role model?
 - Are you struggling with accepting how deeply our Heavenly Father loves you?
 - Are you still consumed with shame from past experiences?
 - Spend some time reflecting on this and share what you need to do to change how you view God. Romans 8:15

Check out and Prayer:

As a check-out:

- Take a few minutes to ponder on what Ps Grant shared with us: **“You are held in God’s memory as His first love in this moment, therefore, Jesus invites you to live from a memory of your first love with Him, in every moment too”.**
- PRAY: Take turns thanking God for one thing that has impacted your life since the day you experienced your first love with Him.
- SHARE: One thing you are challenged to change during the coming week to help you remain intimately connected to God.

Love God:

- Meditate on 1 John 4:19 (NIV) “We love because He first loved us.”

- For personal study check out the following devotions on [YouVersion](#):

- [Belong](#)
- [Knowing God](#)
- [Made to belong](#)

Love People:

- For upcoming next steps in your discipleship journey; like Baptism, Discipleship 101, Freedom, or a SERVE Team. Sign up online at Church Center/ the [website](#).
- Invite the kids in your neighbourhoods/families to be part of Holiday Club 2023, Monday 26 – Friday 30 June! Check out <https://edgechurch.co.za/holidayclub/>