

Icebreaker

What do you admire most in other people? Think about traits people have, like honesty, sincerity, stamina, bubbly personality, warmth, ability to speak intelligently, etc. Explain why?

Opening Prayer – Please read Psalm 51:10-13 and pause for a short silent prayer before beginning

- 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
11 Do not cast me away from Thy presence,
And do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me.
12 Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation,
And sustain me with a willing spirit.
13 *Then* I will teach transgressors Thy ways,
And sinners will be converted to Thee.

Open It

1. If you were dying and just had a short time to live, what would you tell your children about life? If you don't have young children, pretend you do and tell us what you'd tell them.
2. Tell the group one thing you've learned from your parents. How did they influence your life?
3. Have you ever thought about what kind of legacy you might leave once you're gone? What might your mom or dad say about you at your funeral? Tell the group.
4. Now, change gears. What do you think your mate might say about you at your funeral? Is it the same thing your parents would say or different? Why?

Explore It

1. What makes one period of life more challenging than another? Think back as you've gone through different situations over time. What has made one period seem great and another awful? Explain
2. What did the tough times do to your spiritual walk? How was God working in your life, or maybe you didn't sense God working at all? Can you share what was going on at that time in your life?
3. Have you had a time during your lifetime when you mused, isn't life grand? Describe that period and tell the group what your spiritual walk was like.
4. How does our sense of well-being affect how we view life? Is it more about perspective than actual circumstance? What do you think? Jesus said in Matthew 5:13-20 NRSV

¹³ 'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The Law and the Prophets

¹⁷ 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter,^a not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks^b one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Get It

1. Two characteristics or uses of salt are what? Apply this to yourself, what is God telling us we should be in this world?
2. Jesus tells us in verse 14 that we need to be a light in the world. Reflect for a moment on your own life. Where do you think God calls you to be a light in the world? Are you that light?
3. Reread verse 17; it seems a little confusing to me. What's your take on this verse? Try to explain it. "The Law and the Prophets" refer to the entire Old Testament (cf. 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 28:23; Rom. 3:21) Jesus said He would **fulfill** the **Law** by obeying it perfectly and would fulfill the prophets' predictions of the Messiah and His kingdom.¹
4. Read Romans 3:21-22, then compare this to verses 19 & 20. Is this comforting to know? What's your opinion?

Apply It

What have you learned from the discussion and scripture texts we studied?

What do you plan to change this next week, based on any new insights you may have reached? What were those new insights?

Closing Prayer - Psalm 150 – please ask for praise reports or items needing prayer

¹ Praise the LORD.

Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.

² Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness.

³ Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,

⁴ praise him with tambourine and dancing,
praise him with the strings and flute,

⁵ praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.

⁶ Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

¹Walvoord, John F., and Zuck, Roy B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Scripture Press Publications, Inc.) 1983, 1985.