

Study Guide for the Central Church of Christ 12-30-18

To Adult Teachers:

December 30 we will have a topical study described in the sermon. Discussion questions are:

1. Matthew 22:35-40 – How encompassing is the command to love God and love people?
2. Exodus 20:2-17 – Categorize the 10 Commandments under “love God” and “love people”:

1 “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.

2 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My Commandments.

3 “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

4 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

5 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

6 “You shall not murder.

7 “You shall not commit adultery.

8 “You shall not steal.

9 “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

10 “You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.”

3. Why is it so important to ask, “What did that say about God?” after reading a passage of scripture?
4. How would it affect your view of other religious organizations if you pulled everything through the knothole of “Is this a heaven or hell issue?”
 - a. How would it affect your attitude toward your friends in other churches?
5. What happens to one’s view of Heaven if you don’t use your imagination?
6. How would believing “There is nothing good for you that God won’t let you do.” affect your decision making?
7. What do you think of Doug Manning’s idea of paying attention to interruptions?
 - a. What would cause fear about paying attention to interruptions?
8. What would it take for you to start “swimming against the current” where you work?
9. Would having a high view of grace cause one to sin more or less?

“Turning points in my life over 48 years” or “What I Wish I Had Known 48 Years Ago”

1. It’s simply about loving God and loving people.

- a. Loving people:
 - a. Watch your humor.
 - a. Gays – what if it were your child?
 - b. Racist - If you think you aren’t a racist: If Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan today it would be known as the Parable of the Good Muslim.
 - c. Your humor clearly reveals who you don’t love. If you don’t love people, you don’t love God.

2. Bible study:

- a. The most important questions to ask about any scripture is, “What does this say about God?”
- b. As important as Bible is, Christianity isn’t about studying the Bible.
 - a. John 3:16 does not say, “For God so love the world he gave us a book.”
 - b. Bible study is about change
 - c. Parable of Fireman: *All his life a man wanted to be a fireman. He took classes on firefighting and made such good grades he was asked to do graduate work in firefighting at Oxford University. He wrote articles about firefighting and lectured all over the world on firefighting. On his death bed he said, “All my life I wanted to be a fireman, but I never got to fight a real fire even one time.”*
 1. Bible study without behavior change is pointless.

3. If it’s not a heaven or hell issue don’t focus on it.

- a. Does anyone seriously think on Judgment Day God is going to say,
 1. “Sorry, you did everything right except you had instruments in worship. Depart from me you worker of iniquity!”
 2. “Sorry...didn’t take LS often enough”
 3. “Sorry...didn’t have elders & deacons”
 4. “Sorry...let a woman lead a prayer”
 5. “Sorry...had wrong view of the 2nd coming”
- b. Brand name Christianity is in decline.
 1. Every major religious group has had significant decline in membership over the last 2 decades.
 2. Since the year 2000 Churches of Christ have declined from 1,600,000 to 1,400,000.

4. Let your imagination run wild about Heaven

- a. Don’t let others’ view of Heaven dampen your view
 - a. I love cloudy days but grew up singing a song about Heaven that said, “O tell me of an unclouded day.”
 - b. What are we going to do when get there?
- b. My view of Heaven:
 - a. 501 funerals = 501 reasons I want to go to Heaven
 - b. I regard the love you’ve shown me for nearly 5 decades as a foretaste of Heaven

5. There is nothing good for you God won’t let you do.

6. Give them hope.

7. Pay attention to interruptions.

Doug Manning writes: *One of the things I admire the most about Him is that He just went about being interrupted and now we gather to study His interruptions. He did not own a Day-Timer. He did not seem to even have a plan in mind. He simply got up every morning and went strolling through the world teaching as He walked and waiting to be interrupted. And He was interrupted. Constantly interrupted.*

A woman touched His robe as He walked by...interruption. A high mucky muck came to see Him late one night...interruption. A tax collector climbed a tree in His path...interruption. They tore up the roof of a house to let a cripple down to him...interruption. A man begged Him to come to his house to save a dying child...interruption. A woman washed His feet with her tears while He was trying to speak...interruption. He could not get to a friend's house until he had been dead for three days and had to be resurrected. He was late because of interruptions.

He was interrupted because He was interruptible. It may well be that this model of walking through the world being interrupted is the living illustration of the Christian life. Could it be that we also are to simply walk through the world and be interrupted? Could that be the real way we are to live it out?

I start every morning off with the Lord's Prayer. I especially try to dwell on "Thy will be done." I am sort of reporting for duty. Then I look for the interruptions. One thing is sure, I may not have changed everyone or anyone, but it has certainly changed me. When we go out and act like God acts we come back feeling like God feels.

8. Swim against the current.

Landon Saunders tells a story about being at a dinner in Washington D.C. not long after the scandal over President Clinton broke. At the table some awful things were said about President Clinton. Landon didn't say a word. After a while someone said, "Landon you've been awfully quiet. Do you have some thoughts on the subject you'd like to share?" He said, "I've been thinking if the President's young daughter came to me and said, 'Landon, what about my dad?' what would I say? If I had talked to her I would have used kind, gentle language. I would have been clear about the mistake her father had made but I would also have been clear that we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that in the presence of love any failure can be overcome."

9. Be big on grace.

I John 1:7 literally says, *"...the blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing us from all sin."* It works something like this: When a person is baptized into Christ that person is covered by the blood of Christ. It's not just a one-time thing where you past sins are forgiven and now it is up to you to live right the rest of the journey. Think of the blood of Jesus as a bloody halo over your head. When Satan whose name means "the accuser" goes to God and accuses you of sin it's as if God looks down from Heaven at you but He looks through that bloody halo and says to Satan, "I don't see anything but the blood of my Son!" It's just really important that you understand that the salvation you were given at your baptism is not punctiliar but ongoing. Grace is the gift that keeps on giving. Romans 6:23 – *"The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."* Did you hear the word "eternal"?

Salvation has been done for you. It was done by Jesus on the cross. On the cross Jesus did not say, "It is almost completed. Now we just need some folks to go live really good lives and they will be saved." He said, "It is finished." He did not say, "It is finished if..." or "It is finished but..." or "It is finished except for..." He said, "It is finished."

10. Final thoughts about when your next preacher is chosen and arrives.