

Spiritual Check-Up

Acts 15:36-41

Did You Know?

The Church has settled several theological and practical disputes throughout even the New Testament. Jesus gave us principles for how to deal with conflict in our diverse body of Christians. From Paul's issues with Peter in Galatia, the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, the separation of Paul and Barnabas over John-Mark and several churches that challenged Paul's authority and apostleship, the bumpy ride of diversity has still been given a path to unity. But we must all choose to follow those principles laid down by Jesus for conflict resolution, which leads to unity!

Monday, July 22, 2013

Read: Acts 15:36-41; 2 Timothy 4:9-13

Discuss: Disputes in the Church should be dealt with in love, but here we can see that the personalities of Paul and Barnabas make the situation untenable, so they separate. Barnabas, who gave Paul his start in ministry now turns to mentor John-Mark, who ran from persecution in his young life. Paul later in 2 Timothy, though, has mended fences and now considers John-Mark to be very useful. It's important to see people for their talents and gifts in the Lord in our lives, even when we don't see eye to eye.

Act: How do you react to people who have a different style or opinion than you? Some people expect others to conform to their standard, while others don't care at all. Still others attempt to either express or maintain their view with tolerance of other views. Depending on your personality type, you may need to find out how to best deal with conflict if it comes to you.

Tuesday, July 23, 2013

Read: Galatians 2:11-14

Discuss: Paul has been fighting for the equality of Gentile Christians (his ministry) with the Jewish Christians who were the first to know Christ historically. Issues of grave importance, like Jesus and Jewish cultural expectations for salvation hang in the balance. Peter, most likely unwittingly, spends more time in fellowship with visiting Jewish

Christians and snubs the Gentile Christians. Paul openly and publicly rebukes him for it. Peter was a leader in the Church, and his actions had great weight and set precedents.

Act: Other believers are watching you. You may not realize it, but you have great influence especially over younger believers. Older believers will watch you to see if you are coming along in the faith well. It's not about chiding you or pushing you around but about lovingly making you a disciple who makes disciples. What kind of example are you to other believers of all spiritual ages?

Wednesday, July 24, 2013

Read: Romans 12:9-21

Discuss: There are so many commands in here for Christians. But they all boil down to one thing: be like Jesus to all people, especially to those who are part of the household of God. Many Christians are very careful to be Christ-like around unbelievers, but might let their guard down inside the Church. We should be the same person in both worlds and should demonstrate Christ-likeness all the time.

Act: Use this like a checklist. How are you doing on each command in your daily life with other Christians? Are there certain people that make these commands easier or harder to follow? What are some ways that you can demonstrate your obedience to these commands for Christian living?

Thursday, July 25, 2013

Read: John 13:34-35

Discuss: More than most New Testament writers, John has a niche in talking about love. He talks about love in so many different contexts, such as Jesus' love for us, Jesus' love for unbelievers who don't know Him, and of course, the love Christians must have for one another. A stunning test to see if you are loving toward other believers is to let the world see how you act around other believers.

Act: If your unsaved friends and colleagues saw how you acted in Church, would it surprise them, or would it fit right in with who you already are? Many Christians struggle with living the consistent witness of Jesus in every area of their life. What steps can you take to make both spheres of your life the same?

Friday, July 26, 2013

Read: Matthew 18:15-20

Discuss: The context of this helpful principle of how to address conflicts in the body of Christ presupposes that there will be conflicts among Christians. Jesus is talking about brothers who sin against one another. It is not that we should never have conflicts, but how we react to them. Jesus put in place three levels of conflict resolution for us to follow. A conflict does not have to result from sin, but any number of issues from diverse backgrounds to different personalities.

Act: Do you follow these principles laid down by Jesus? It's so easy to reach out to others and tell them about how we've been wronged, but Jesus calls us to be straight up with one another and deal with conflicts quickly before they become even bigger hindrances to the move of His Spirit and His ministry!

Saturday, July 27, 2013

Read: Matthew 5:23-24

Discuss: The context of Jesus' illustration about offerings at the altar is to show us that we must not let conflict fester. We must deal openly and honestly and quickly with one another to restore our fellowship with each other.

Act: This kind of commitment to stopping our anger in its tracks and humbly coming to others whom we think have wronged us is terrifying to most people. We are not used to be so openly honest with others. It creates a fellowship, a band of brothers, so to speak, who hide nothing from one another. But that is the way Jesus designed the Church!

Sunday, July 28, 2013

Read: Matthew 28:16-20

Discuss: Amelia Captosta will be telling us all about her mission trip to Ghana this week!

Act: How are you supporting missions in church? There are at least three ways to support missions. The first is through praying for our missionaries. The second is to give financially to missions so that missionaries can live and serve God's Kingdom in other countries. Finally, you can go on a short-term mission trip to see what it's like and minister to other cultures!