

Dear God

1 Pet 4:17; Matt 7:3-5; Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13-25

Week of Aug 4, 2024

BELONG

Ask this Ice Breaker Question: Share about a favorite teacher from your past, what you liked about them, and how they made you feel.

BELIEVE

Today we will read the passages in step with the questions

1. Read 1 Peter 4:17-19. What difference does it make when Christians choose to pray and trust God through trials? Does the world notice?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

Despite the fact that trials are a result of a broken world, like Joseph we lean into God and trust Him to bring about the ultimate good (recall a few weeks back Gen 50:20).

2. Read Matt 7:3-5. Why is it so tempting to point out the faults of others? What is being avoided?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

Sanctification (God's way of purging sin from our lives) is not a pleasant process. In fact, it's so hard that we cannot overcome it on our own strength; our flesh constantly wages war against it. Pointing out the faults in others is not only easier, but also filled with pride and spiritual laziness. As we see when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, God calls us to reject the quick and easy paths of self-glorification and embrace death to self ("take up your cross daily") so that God may be glorified in us and sin is put to death. Ironically, doing so brings life.

3. Read Rom 13:1-7. There are no perfect governments, yet God still requires each of us to obey our authorities. Why is that? And what might it look like to have no government?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

Obeying authority is a posture of submission, which God requires of each of us. He is aware of the corruption all around us, but to have a society without a governing authority (anarchy) would result in total chaos; every man for himself (like in the book of Judges). While we are not called to obey the government if it is forcing us to sin, we cannot merely choose to throw the baby out with the bathwater by crowning ourselves as king/queen. Disobedience to our government is disobedience to God (v 4).



- 4. Read 1 Peter 2:13-25. When we choose honor over bitterness and complaining, what difference does that make in ourselves and in our testimony to others? Why do you think Peter specifically calls this “a gracious thing” in God’s sight?**

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

If any human has had permission to be bitter at injustice it was Jesus. Yet as we see especially in v 22-24 He chose to stop the retaliatory cycle and absorb the suffering, trusting in the fact that “Vengeance is mine, says the Lord. I will repay.” This does not mean we are to be a doormat and never speak up, but it also means we don’t retaliate. Again, recall Joseph’s actions when he endured trials. His response was a reflection of His trust in God, which is why it’s such a gracious thing to God.

BECOME:

Ask this question:

- 5. Trusting in God can be quite difficult, especially when going through trials. When you are hurting, do you sometimes feel like you have to “tidy up” your prayers to Him? Do you avoid Him altogether?**

Finish by reading King David’s words in Psalm 22:1-2 and discuss the blessing of being fully transparent (honest) with God.

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

Recall the fact that Jesus himself quoted Ps 22 while on the cross.

Sharing our raw feelings with God is not only acceptable but necessary. Besides...He already knows what we’re thinking and feeling.

Close by praying together.