

lifegroup

resource guide

for the week of 28 October

*For He is our God,*   
*And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.*   
*Today, if you would hear His voice,*  
*Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,*   
*As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,*

*(Psalm 95.7-8)*

For the Kingdom of God is like…

It was that time of year when junior devils were tenured and certificated by the A.F.D.I.— the Academy for Demonic Influence. The devil, himself— why does inclusive language not extend to him?— was present for the day-long ceremonies. At one point during the festivities he reviewed three eager graduates who stood at attention before him. To the first he said, “When you get out into the world what are you going to say to people?”

“Oh,” the evil spirit confidently replied, “I shall tell them that there is no God.”

“That’s no use,” reprimanded the devil. “Creation persuades too many humans that there is a God. Not many will believe you.”

Then he said to the second demon, “And what are you going to tell people?

“I will say that there is no judgment— SIR!” was his reply.

“That’s not much use,” answered an exasperated devil. “Conscience tells them about judgment. Not many will believe you.”

The devil then turned to the third spirit and skeptically addressed him, “Now what about you?”

“I shall tell people that there is a God and a judgment to come,” answered the little devil, “but I shall add that there is no hurry.”

“Excellent!” said the devil. “Many people will believe this.”

I believe that the world, the flesh, and the devil conspire to persuade us that there is no hurry about turning to God and/or responding to His call. However, if the truth be told, time is running out fast. Procrastination is a very dangerous vice because it masquerades as “deferred obedience.” When we procrastinate we dodge the call of God. We delude ourselves when we perceive that the problem is “timing” rather than our resolve to respond promptly. The right time to respond to God’s voice is always /now/— as soon as we hear it.

Consider this parable Jesus told, “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ ‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.’ Which of the two did what his father wanted?” (Matthew 21.28-31)

God will never call us to what is needless, irrelevant, or trivial. His call is inseparable from His rule and His rule is inseparable from His love. Neither servant nor lover will ignore the urgency of their King’s call or their Beloved’s invitation. Both recognize that delay will threaten the relationship. Beloved, are you putting off anything which needs your attention now?

Enjoy your LifeGroup!

What is one of your favorite murder mysteries? Why?

Getting to know one another…

Getting to know one another…

Reading Scripture together…

Reading Scripture together…

Exodus 20.13; Matthew 5.21-26… Because anger kills

Exodus 20.13: *You shall not murder.*

Matthew 5.21-26: *“You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’* ***22*** *“But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.* ***23*** *“Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,* ***24*** *leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.* ***25*** *“Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.* ***26*** *“Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent.”*

What? (does the Bible say?)

The Hebrew version of Exodus 20:13-15 contains only six words—the equivalent of “No murder. 29 No adultery. No stealing.” What is the general effect of this terseness?

Now what? (how will I think?)

The NASB translates the sixth commandment as “You shall not murder” rather than “Do not kill.” Why is this an important distinction?

Now what? (how will I think?)

Jesus places murder and unrighteous anger in the same category. How are they related?

A.B. Bruce writes: “Raca expresses contempt for a man’s head = you stupid!; [fool] expresses contempt for his heart and character = you scoundrel!” Why do you think these thoughts and words would be murder in God’s sight (Matthew 5:22)?

What modern-day equivalents to “Raca” do you level at others?

What does Matthew 5:23-26 teach us about broken relationships?

Throughout this passage, how has Jesus challenged a superficial view of righteousness?

So what? (what difference does it make?)

Why did Jesus zero in on the emotions behind our violent actions?

Read the following verses from Proverbs: 12.16; 14.29; 16.32; 19.11.

Based on these proverbs what is the opposite of “anger”?

What/who, in general, makes you angry? Why?

Do you think your anger (grumpiness?!) compromises your witness? Why or why not?

List an occasion when you became angry during the past month. List what triggered your anger, how you expressed your anger, and what you wish you had done differently in response. (Use separate piece of paper if you need to.)

My prayer needs (write down in advance)

How can your LifeGroup hold you accountable to keep your anger under control?

Praying for my group…