

Acts: Multiply (Acts 22:30 – 23:35)

For the week of July 17, 2016

Spiritual Discipline Checkup

Spiritual disciplines can be described as those behaviors that help our spiritual growth and enable us to grow to spiritual maturity. The process of spiritual growth and development begins to take place the moment a person encounters the risen Christ and comes to Him for salvation. How are you doing in the following disciplines?

- Quiet time – Spending daily time alone to be with God.
- Study – Spending daily time reading the Scriptures and meditating on its meaning and importance in your life.
- Prayer – Daily talking to and listening to God about your relationship with Him and about the concern of others.
- Fellowship – Mutual caring and ministry in the body of Christ.

Discuss in your group.

Acts 22:30-23:11

- Read the story in Acts 22:30 – 23:11. As a group, rebuild the story.

Observation: Paul is facing death at any minute. What do we see here that is one of the secrets of his boldness?

Interpretation: How does 1 Corinthians 4:1-4 help us understand a “clear conscience?”

Interpretation: How can we have a good conscience when we know we are sinners? How can Paul (in Acts 23 and 1 Corinthians 4:3-5) give us guidance for having the same kind of confidence that he had?

Application: Let's take inventory! In order to have a clear conscience:

- a. You must not be living in contradiction to what you know is God's will. Of course we disobey God, but are you living in a pattern of disobedience in any area(s)?
- b. You must be using your gifts and opportunities to serve him. Are you willing to be identified as a Christian to those around you? Are you giving time to ministry that fits your temperament and gifts?
- c. You must remember that the above two points cannot ever make you right with God. They can however, provide evidence that you are really an adopted child, saved by grace, and now completely accepted by God. Do you understand this?

Observation: Commentators are divided over why Ananias had Paul struck (Acts 23:1-5) and how Paul could have failed to recognize the High Priest. What do you think?

Interpretation: Was Paul's anger wrong? How does Paul's own statements in Ephesians 4:26-27 shed light on this issue?

Application: How does Paul get self-control? Where do you need to practice these insights?

Acts 23:12-35

- Read the story in Acts 23:12-35. As a group, rebuild the story.

Observation: How does verse 11 shed light on God's activity in the rest of this passage?

Interpretation: How does it shed light on God's actions and Paul's heart and attitude? What does verse 11 guarantee and not guarantee? Do we have anything like this same guarantee or promise that Paul was given?

Application: Christian author John Stott writes: "the most...cunning of human plans cannot succeed if God opposes them."

- a. How does this passage show this? (Hint: trace the "coincidences")
- b. How has your experiences shown this?
- c. How does Claudius Lysias twist the truth to look good? Do you ever do this?

Pray

VBS starts on Monday, July 25 here on the campus. Let's pray for the following:

- Pray for our Children's staff as they make final preparations.
- Pray for the children to come.
- Pray for the parents to bring the children.
- Pray for many adult volunteers.
- Pray that many children will respond to the Good News of Jesus and accept Him as Lord and Savior.
- Pray for many children to recommit their lives to Jesus Christ.
- Pray for the health and safety of all children and adults.