

Baycities Lomita Winter/Spring 2019 Growth Groups

New Series: “WWJD- What Would James Do”- Part 3

Theme: “Breaking The Strangle Hold Of Our Struggles” Week of Mar. 17, 2019

Follow-Up Bible Study and Discussion Questions

Message Summary: This week it’s all about dealing with the struggles we face as Christians, saddled with a human body, living in a fallen world! How’s that for a challenge? It does no good blaming others for our temptations or sins...because the problem is inside of us! Our hearts are filled with the very things that draw us into the sins we hate! As Paul writes... in my mind, I want to love and serve God! But I see at work in me a different desire... that fights against what I know is right to do, and entices me to do wrong! The devil didn’t make me do it, my human nature did, and motivated by the temptations of this world I live in! That’s the struggle we’re in! We need to get serious about the “sins that cling so closely” and deal with the nagging ones as soon as possible. That’s a big part of spiritual growth. Jesus does His part when it comes to helping us through temptations but we must do our part and say no to the enticements of the flesh, or face the sense of shame, guilt and defeat that comes with repeat sin! Forgiveness is always available from Jesus to cleanse us... but do we just keep on sinning so God can keep on forgive us? Great discussion question! I think I’ll throw that one in too! Remember God loves you and is committed to changing you more into the image of His Son Jesus over the course of your lifetime. Our participation is the point of the message this week! We must engage! Have a blast discussing this week’s message!

1. You’ve probably heard the term when it comes to temptations... **“The devil made me do it!”** Flip Wilson, a 1970’s and 80’s comic made a fortune using that line in his routine! After hearing the message this week, do you agree or disagree with that statement? Why or why not. (Hint: look at James 1:14-15 for guidance here)

2. **If the devil didn’t make us do it...** fall for the temptations that come at us daily, what is the source of the desires that make us fall for the temptations we come up against in our lives that we discussed in the Sunday message? (Hint: Re-read James 1:14 & Matt.15:19 for insight here)

3. Paul the Apostle described the battle that he saw raging inside of himself between his new nature as a Christian, and his old nature resident in the appetites of his body! Read Romans 7:22-25, and discuss the following questions:

Romans 7:22 I love God's law with all my heart. 23But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

- a. If we're saved when we place our faith and trust in Jesus, why do you think Paul says in verse 23, that there "is still "sin" or "brokenness" within me" that must be dealt with?

- b. Someone has once said, that our two natures (The new nature we receive at conversion and the old nature resident in our physical bodies and hearts) that now exist when we become Christians are like two dogs fighting... and the one that wins is the one we feed. Discuss that illustration as it gives insight into overcoming the temptation and sins we struggle with.

- c. So, we agree with James and Paul that there is a struggle between my mind trying to do the right things now (verse 25) and my sinful nature that is still affecting my life adversely. So what are some things we can do so that the temptations that hit us from our culture, TV, cell phones and internet don't overwhelm our lives? The lives of our kids?

4. So, discuss the following: **I can keep on sinning because Jesus will keep on forgiving me.** Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not. (Hint after discussing the group's opinions, look at Romans 6:15-19 and reflect on what it says.) Is forgiveness still available when we sin after becoming Christians? Why or why not?