



Grace Group Discussion Questions

Title: To God be the Glory
Theme: Our church and everything else exists for the ultimate goal of displaying the beauty of God's perfections.
Text: Isaiah 42:8; 43:7; 1 Corinthians 10:31
Speaker: Erik Thoennes
Date: Sunday, August 1, 2010

Grace Group Questions for this Sunday's Sermon:

- 1) How have you understood the glory of God? How did the sermon help to clarify God's glory?
- 2) Why do you think that we tend to have such a hard time with God's pursuit of his own glory? What would it take for us to move beyond hating this about God or merely accepting it to the point where we love that he seeks glory for himself?
- 3) Go over the 10 Grace ministry values and discuss them as a group. Are there any you don't understand well or disagree with? What is the biblical basis for your disagreement?
- 4) Are there any values you wish could be added to the existing values? Among all the values that could have been included, why do you think our church chose the ones we did?
- 5) Are there areas of your life or the ministry of our church that you have a hard time seeing as glorifying to God? What would it take for you to believe that all we do, even the mundane things are able to be God glorifying?

Ministry Values:

- 1) God's Glory
- 2) Christ-Centered Worship
- 3) Great Commission
- 4) Biblical Preaching
- 5) Priesthood of all Believers
- 6) Elder Leadership
- 7) Spirit-Led
- 8) Diversity
- 9) Children and Youth
- 10) Simplicity

See the next pages for a more detailed description of each ministry value.

1) GOD'S GLORY

Our ultimate goal is to glorify God (1 Cor 6:20, 10:31; 2 Cor 4:15) and be led by the Spirit (Matt 4:1; Acts 20:22; Rom 8:14; 1 Cor 2:13; Gal 5:16, 25; Phil 3:3; Acts 15:28) in all we do, wherever he leads.

We do not want to be driven by cultural values or programs but by the Holy Spirit. We believe that God is most glorified when we focus all we do on the living Christ and the Gospel of Christ found in the Scriptures (Matt 4:23; Rom 1:9, 16; 16:25; 1 Cor 9:16; 2 Cor 4:4-6; Phil 1:27; 1 Thess 1:5).

We believe God is glorified and desires to work through the prayer of his people.

2) CHRIST-CENTERED WORSHIP

We strive for our corporate worship to be God-honoring, Christ-centered, biblically saturated, Spirit-led, reverent and joyful (John 4:21-24; Phil 3:3; Heb 12:28-29; Rev 5).

In worship we should get a glimpse of the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Cor 4:6), be shepherded, taught, exhorted and encouraged with the gospel as our primary focus in our corporate worship time. As in all we do, we must plan our corporate worship constantly asking the question; will God be pleased with and honored by this?

All our lives should be an act of worship (Rom 12:1) and corporate worship is more than singing. All that takes place when God's people gather to worship him (Scripture reading, preaching, silence, prayer, testimonies, the Lords Supper, Baptism, etc.) should be done with Christ-centered reverence and joy.

3) GREAT COMMISSION

We believe that the local church should have evangelism and missions, and service (especially to the poor) as major priorities in financial commitments, training, prayer and teaching.

Our commitment to missions and evangelism grows out of our desire that God be increasingly glorified by the nations he has created (Isa 12:4; 66:19; 12:4; Matt 19:29; Acts 15:14; Rom 9:17; Rom 1:5; 15:9; 3 John 7).

Currently, our missions budget is 25% of our overall budget, which enables us to partner with our missionaries spread around the world. We seek to serve and reach our community through our small groups as well as outreach opportunities.

4) BIBLICAL PREACHING

We believe that preaching and teaching should be biblically based and primarily expositional, theologically instructive, and intended to help us to love God and others more and make us more like Jesus. We desire to preach the word with clarity, conviction, boldness and most of all the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:42; 9:27-28; 10:42; Rom 10:13-17; 1 Tim 5:17; 2 Tim 4:1-5).

We strive to see that our preaching and teaching point us to God and teach us how to live out our faith in our daily lives. Personal Bible study and prayer and our small group sermon-based discussions are our primary means in applying the Word to our lives.

Because we revere God's word and seek to obey its commands (1 Tim 4:13), we like to begin preaching series with a reading service where we read through the book to be preached, and end it with a reflection service in which the congregation shares what God has taught them through the series. We also like to integrate the main message of the passage to be preached into the entire worship service.

5) THE PREISTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS

The priesthood of all believers (Ex 19:5-6; 1 Peter 2:4-9) is a major theological commitment for us. We seek to have every person in our church ministering by exercising their specific gifts and thereby fulfilling their amazing privilege of being part of God's royal priesthood. Every member of our congregation should function as a minister. Therefore, Discipleship, training and leadership development are high priorities at Grace.

6) ELDER LEADERSHIP

We believe the New Testament teaches a plurality of elders as the model of church leadership (1 Peter 5:1-2; Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 5:17-18). Along with our commitment to the priesthood of all believers we also recognize the need for strong, Spirit-led, biblically instructed elder leadership under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

However, the elders are not the only shepherds at Grace. We want to see all those with pastoral and teaching gifts using them regularly. The leaders of our small groups function as pastors of their small flocks within our church.

We believe pastors/elders should function primarily as shepherds who emphasize the ministry of the word, prayer, discipleship and the spiritual health of God's people. They are not primarily administrators, managers, etc.

7) SPIRIT-LED

Under elder leadership, we seek to make decisions in the church by prayerful consensus and leading of the Holy Spirit, rather than by one person's authority or by congregational voting (Acts 15:28).

The New Testament does not picture the church as a dictatorship or a democracy. Biblical images used to describe the way a church functions are a family or body where each member is necessary and valuable but with distinct functions.

8) DIVERSITY

To reflect the diversity of the body of Christ around the world, we desire our fellowship be intentionally intergenerational and diverse in all ways. The church is a community which has Jesus Christ as our head. Our shared faith in Christ, not our common interests, hobbies or personalities is the primary basis of our fellowship (Rom 12; 1 Cor 12; Eph 2; 4; Gal 3:25-29).

We want our fellowship among believers as integrated as possible. We believe that believers of all ages, walks of life, races, and spiritual maturity should be developing relationships. Therefore we strive for our corporate worship and small groups to reflect the beautiful diversity of the family of God. The church in America is sadly segregated by race and socioeconomic status.

Therefore we believe that is a mistake to further segregate our already segregated churches when we walk through the church doors. This also means that intentional special interest groups (e.g. singles, college, young marrieds, or senior citizens) will not be our primary focus.

This is especially true of our many college students who need and want to spend time with non-college students when they are involved with the local church. This also means we do not desire to divide the congregation with worship services that target particular styles or tastes (e.g. contemporary or traditional).

9) CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Our children's and youth ministries are a major priority for us and we therefore devote a significant percentage of our resources there (Prov 22:6; Matt 19:14). Children should be taught the Bible, and their spiritual development should be thoughtfully and creatively fostered.

10) SIMPLICITY

We want our church to run well and we want all we do to be done with excellence (1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17; 23), but we never want our church to feel like it is an impersonal machine. We don't want to create and maintain programs that will only serve to make our lives more hectic.

We desire that our often busy lives in the suburbs of LA be increasingly God-centered, contemplative, peaceful and loving. We do not desire busy lives, but kingdom-focused, wise, Spirit-led abundant lives satisfied in God and giving honor to his gracious holy name.