

April 22, 2020

Dear Sunday School Class,

We started a new study this week called "Overcomer." The Max Lucado study I ordered was not available for several weeks, and I have had the "Overcomer" study tucked away, so I decided maybe it would be a good one to study. The title explanation is interesting. It is "What Do You Allow To Define You?" What a loaded question that is!

The first section was "Who You Are Starts With Where You Come From." This pointed us to Genesis 1:26 "God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." The study reminded us that God didn't confer with the man to determine what his nature should or shouldn't be, and what his calling or direction in life should be. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, *which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*" The class discussed our need to recognize that God has always had a plan for us, and that is our starting point for our whole life; that is where we come from.

The second section was "Who You Are Includes Where You've Been." All of us have come from living a life of sin and rebellion, and when we accept Christ as our personal Savior we are new creatures. Spiritually we have left our state of condemnation, however our past has definitely colored who we are. The question the study asked was "Are there patterns of sin in our lives because we've believed the lies of the world." In other words, does society, the media, and the culture where we live tell us we must live in such a way as to be the most prosperous, most attractive, have a certain profession, look a certain way, be thin and attractive at all costs, drive a certain vehicle, etc. etc. When we are driven by these things, we can put our Christian life on the back burner, and ignore the Holy Spirit's guidance for the life He has chosen for us. The other sin pattern we can fall into is choosing our own pleasures and desires. We would rather be "popular" than live our faith, and we feel justified in our grudges and angers, which leads us into a fog of sin, and self-deception far from Christ.

The third section was "Who You Are Ultimately Indicates Where You Are Headed." The class talked about how we describe ourselves often by titles such as married, single, farmer, teacher, parent, etc. but God sees us as *redeemed, His child, His witnesses and safe in His grace.* If we can constantly remind ourselves that our life with Jesus is really who we are, it will change our beliefs, our behaviors, and our level of inner peace.

The study assignment was to take some time and write a list of our own priorities, and be brutally honest with ourselves. Then spend time praying how we can let the Holy Spirit show us what our priorities should be. That doesn't mean He will tell us that our family, job, or relationships should not be a priority, of course they should be, but the question is "How do I involve God in all of my priorities?" Our Scripture study for the week is Psalm 32, which was written by David. As we read it, we should really let it speak to our heart, and pray about our need for the kind of pure heart David yearned for, so we will earnestly seek to receive God's grace and mercy as our own. That is what should define us!

We have time during these days of decreased activity to spend reading God's Word, and talking to Him. This is a wonderful time to draw close to our loving Savior, and inventory our own life in light of His Word. "What A Friend We Have In Jesus." His will is that He will define us, and that we will lean on Him for our life's moment by moment plan and purpose.

Blessings to you all,

Judy & Stephen