

# Life Group Notes

*These notes are to serve you as you lead your group.*

*Please feel free to select the passages and **only use the questions which are most relevant to your group** and for the way you want to lead the session. (There are more questions here than you'll need)*

- *Please choose (or adapt) the questions which you believe will **bring about the most honest, faith-building and life changing conversations**, and add others if you want to.*
- *The readings and questions develop from one section to the next. Please **take time to move through the ones you want to use, giving time for discussion and sharing - ideally leading to a response to God's word.***

# Life Group Notes

Theme: Saying Yes

## Saying 'Yes' to the Fear of the Lord

Sometimes we find the teaching of different parts of the bible confusing. The source of the confusion is sometimes because we expect the bible to function like any other book we read today, when actually God's word is ancient, and is written to different people, in different places and at different times. On other occasions our confusion is just because the concepts in the bible seem unfamiliar or strange to us. Today's topic is one of the latter cases. The bible speaks of the 'Fear of the Lord' as a positive thing, yet today we mostly talk about 'fear' as being a negative experience. In this session we'll see how we can reconcile this, and how we can respond to the invitation we read in the bible to discover the 'Fear of the Lord'.

Setting the scene

- 1. Do you have any fears that you have overcome or grown out of (that you are willing to talk about)?**
- 2. What reduced, or removed, the fear for you?**

Read **Job 28:23-28**

This is a remarkable chapter in a remarkable book of the bible. Here we see Job at his lowest. He and his friends have been searching for wisdom, and seeking understanding, with the same determination that people mine for gold and precious stones. In these verses Job declares that only God understands the way to wisdom.

- 3. Job declares that "God alone understands the way to wisdom" (Job 28:23). What do you think about Job's claim?**
- 4. If you believe that Job is speaking the truth, why do you think we so often only come to God for wisdom after we've exhausted other options?**
- 5. Job writes that "The fear of the Lord is true wisdom; to forsake evil is real understanding." (28:28) What do you think of when you read / hear of 'The fear of the Lord'?**

Read **Job 42:1-6**

Sometimes we try to explain the 'Fear of the Lord' by saying that it really means reverence, or respect. Whilst there is truth in this, for many in the bible, the 'Fear of the Lord' goes deeper than this, and is the result of a personal experience of encountering God. True 'fear of the Lord' comes about as we respond to God's invitation to know him

more. It is only after these deepening encounters with God that we grow to know him more, love him more, and can begin to experience the 'Fear of the Lord' which is a sense of deep revelation that we carry about who God is.

- 6. After hearing from God personally, Job replied "I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes." (42:5). How has your understanding of God been changed by your encounters with him?**
  
- 7. Is this changing how you live? In what ways?**

### **Look at Hebrews 12:28 and 1 John 4:16-19**

The book of Hebrews frequently refers to the access that we have to God, and is filled with encouragements to come to him boldly. Towards the end of the book we read that we are to (a) be thankful and (b) worship him with 'holy fear and awe'. Reading this alongside 1 John 4 can be helpful to us.

- 8. From these passages we see that we can live in God's love, have confidence to come boldly to God AND at the same time a holy fear and awe of him. How do you hold both of these complimentary truths together at the same time?**

[These two are held together in our experience of encountering God. When we come to God we glimpse his majesty, we are caught up in his love for us, AND we are blown away by how powerfully awesome, majestic, holy, and wonderful he is.]

- 9. What will you do over the next couple of weeks to further cultivate a growing awareness of God and encounter him as he really is?**

### **Application**

It may be that a time of worship, reflection, or response is appropriate for your group, thanking God for who he is, for his love and grace for us.

You may like to read **Acts 9:31** and pray that we'll all know more of God and be changed by this ongoing encounter.