

Series - My Life for His Glory

Date/s - 8 September 2019

Scripture - 1 Corinthians 10:14-11:1

Speaker - Pastor Joachim

Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

www.thesource4ym.com/games/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like “You You Are God”, “This I Believe (The Creed)”, “Saviour King” or “Reward”.

Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand that we are created to glorify God with our lives;
2. Learn how to exercise our Christian freedom, especially in the grey areas of life where the Bible may be silent on.

Word [45 min]

Pastor Joachim preached a sermon on 1 Corinthians 10:14-11:1, centred around the call for us to glorify God with our Christian freedom.

Pastor Joachim started his sharing with a brief background of 1 Corinthians 10. We learnt that one of the main problems the Corinth church faces, was the issue of what they should do in the areas of life that the Bible is not explicit about (grey areas). Paul's careful address of this issue begins in 1 Corinthians 8, and he builds up his argument to reach its pinnacle in 1 Corinthians 10. Pastor Joachim summarized 1 Corinthians 8-10 as follows:

- 1 Cor 8: In the grey areas, you are free, no problem.

But there are two considerations

- 1 Cor 9: How will it affect others?
- 1 Cor 10: How will it affect you?

Pastor Joachim then shared the main message in v 31 - whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, do it all for the glory of God. The question to ask ourselves today is whether we are living life for His glory. Sharing from Colossians 1:16 and Isaiah 43:7, Pastor Joachim reminded us that we are not the centre of the universe - instead, all things (including us) have been created through God and for God. God's glory is the goal of all things. We are made to glorify God and enjoy Him forever (Westminster Shorter Catechism). God not only delights in our worship; He demands our worship!

Pastor Joachim next shared two guiding principles from Paul, to keep in mind when we aim to glorify God with our Christian freedom, in the grey areas of life in which the Bible is not clear about or is silent on:

- **First, we recognise that we must practice edification over gratification.**
 - Drawing from various scripture references in 1 Corinthians 10:23 and 1 Corinthians 14:26, Pastor Joachim explained how not all things edify, even if they are permissible. An example of this would be watching TV. It is permissible but the question is – does it edify? “How can you pull down the strongholds of Satan if you don't even have the strength to turn off your TV?” -

Leonard Ravenhill.

- **Second, we must put others before self.**
 - From passages in 1 Cor. 10:24 and Matt. 22:37-39, we see how we have a spiritual obligation towards one another, to seek the good of the other. To Paul, freedom does not mean seeking his own good, but to be free in Christ in such a way that one can truly seek to benefit and build up another person.

Let's worship God in the exercise of our Christian liberties - not in a way to tear down others, but to build others and ourselves up.

Summary Of Sermon

1. When we approach decision-making in grey areas, our aim must be to glorify God. (10:31)
2. We can do this by:
 - a. Practising edification over gratification (10:23)
 - b. Putting others before ourselves (10:24)

Discussion Questions

1. **If the Bible is silent on grey areas, what then informs our stance on these issues? How can we know that we are making a decision "for the glory of God"?** [10 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a recap and an ice-breaking question. We learn from the sermon that grey areas are issues that the Bible may not explicitly state that they are categorically sinful, instead leaving Christians to make God-glorifying decisions based on their individual convictions. A few modern-day examples are: drinking alcohol, smoking, gambling (or 4D/ Toto), how we spend our money, how we dress, dating, the movies we watch, whether to use birth control, etc. It could be that many of the above examples are modern phenomena that had not existed in biblical times.*

Members can also examine what guides their beliefs on these grey areas. For some issues like smoking and gambling, it could be measuring these practices against the "harm principle" (i.e. whether these practices harm others, and if so they should be avoided), or taking a cue from society on what are moral vices. Christians may disagree on specific practices in these and other grey areas. Leaders can help to close the discussion on this question by going through a summary of 1 Corinthians 8-10, i.e., there are two considerations, how the practice will affect others and how it will affect you.

One key element to help decision-making in grey areas is the cell community. If one is not sure if a particular decision brings glory to God, then one should seek the collective wisdom of a group of trusted believing friends (Proverbs 11:14).

2. **What does it mean to choose edification over gratification? What is edification?** [10 min]

Leader's Notes: *A relate question. A simple definition of choosing edification is to choose things that help me grow into the likeness of Christ. This does not mean we can never choose things for the sake of gratification. It is ok to watch TV, to do a sport or even to go on a holiday for the sake of gratification. But in grey matters, when there seems to be a "neither right or wrong" situation, one should make a decision based on edification, not gratification.*

For example, the Bible is silent on how much we should spend on food. Eating at expensive restaurants is not a sin. If gratification were my goal, then I would cultivate a lifestyle of eating at expensive restaurants. However, as a believer, I would rather choose to eat reasonably priced food because this encourages a simpler lifestyle in me (edification). It does not mean, I can never eat at expensive restaurants. But, it does not become a lifestyle for me because my end goal is edification, not gratification. Living a simpler lifestyle breaks the grip of materialism in the life of a believer and leaves room for God to be our Lord!

Members can discuss their past experiences of choosing not to indulge in something gratifying for the sake of edification.

3. **Think about where and how you spend your recreational and leisure times. Keeping in mind the two guiding principles shared by Pastor Joachim, do your hobbies and choices of entertainment, express or advance your holiness?** [10 min]

Leader's Notes: *A reflect question.*

Pastor Joachim shared two guiding principles on how a Christian should exercise his freedom in Christ:

- *Edification over Gratification*
- *Others over Self*

Have the cell members think about their go-to hobbies and choice of entertainment, whenever they have free time on hand. How do these activities influence others- will they benefit, or will they be stumbled? Are we a better person for the time spent on these activities? Above all, is God honoured by your attitudes and behaviours associated with these activities? Do they bring glory to God?

The takeaway here is that our freedom in Christ motivates us to use this freedom to maximize God's glory in our lives. Read Galatians 5:13, Colossians 1:16, and 1 Corinthians 10:23-24. We learn from Galatians 5:13, that while our lives are constrained no longer by sin, we have been set free for the sole purpose to be in service to each other. "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). In short, we must be trained to use our Christian freedom well. It is all too easy to exercise our freedom in a way that stumbles another brother or sister. What might be a hobby or a casual interest to us, might become a god to someone else. We should not be careless or cavalier in the way we exercise our Christian liberties - just because we are not held beholden to an activity, does not mean that our fellow believers are immune, or will not be led astray. Therefore, we must put others before ourselves when making these decisions.

4. **What practical steps can I take, to make better decisions in the grey areas of my life?** [10 min]

Leader's Notes: *A response question. In addition to the two principles above, we can adopt some practices to strengthen our decision-making, in the grey areas of life. Some other practical handles include: (taken from independentBaptist.com, by Curtis Hutson)*

- *Reading and studying Scriptures for ourselves, so that we will be clear on all Scriptures have to say about that particular subject.*
- *Pray for God to reveal His will on this issue, and submit our desires to God. Ask for God's wisdom.*
- *Wait for the leading of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:14, Acts 13:1-2)*
- *Be honest with yourself, whether such activity can be done in a manner that is pleasing to our Lord*

Jesus (Colossians 3:17), and whether we can sincerely give thanks to God for that matter in question.

- *If in doubt, seek the counsel of godly Christians (Proverbs 24:6)*

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. At all times, every RiverLifer will choose to bless and glorify Him.

Announcements

1. **Water Baptism Class**

Sat, 28 Sep | 9am-3pm | Faith Chapel

Register for this class at the Information Counter by Sun, 22 Sep. For enquiries, please contact Karen Koh at 6511 4139 or email her at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg. Our next baptism service will be on Sun, 17 Nov

Church Vision:

“A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations.”

Mission:

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.