

C'Nex Group Discussion Guide

Use the following questions to guide your C'Nex discussion. The focus should be to clarify meaning and develop application of this week's biblical message from our Sunday Experience.

Week #9: Wrestling with the Gray of Wills (James 4:1-17)

1. Do you agree that conflict is usually caused by unfulfilled desires? Explain. Read James 4:1-2.
2. How do you discern if something is a bad or good desire and a right or wrong method of getting it?
3. Read James 4:3-4. What does James mean by “wrong motives”? Discuss what the difference is between praying with right and wrong motives and how that might work in your life, especially with the reality that God does want us to be cared for and pleasure isn't a forbidden thing.
4. What is your honest reaction to the statement: *God will meet your true needs if you will simply ask him to do so*? Do you believe that? How does Matthew 6:25-34 inform this? How would that belief translate into behavior for you?
5. Think about your life and the way you make plans. Now, choose one of the following to honestly explain how you normally make your plans: (a) *Logical Larry*—whatever makes the most sense; (b) *Circumstantial Sally*—interpret every event as a way God is talking to me; (c) *Advice Adam*—follow what other people say is best; (d) *Apathetic Alley*—I don't really plan; (e) *Spirit-led Sam*—I think biblically, pray often, and know God well enough to follow him rather easily.
6. Read James 4:13-14 and explain what a life lived in this way looks like today. What is wrong with this method of planning?
7. If God has given us the abilities to think and choose and make decisions, how do we know when to use those abilities or to seek his guidance?
8. Break into small groups and read each of these verses: Acts 18:21; Rom. 1:10; 1 Cor. 4:19; 16:7; Phil. 2:19, 24; Acts 16:6-10. These are episodes from the Apostle Paul's life. Determine what you see about Paul's approach to following God? How does that tie to James 4:13-17?
9. Did you make any “serious” or “radical” decisions to grow in this past week? If so, share the ones you are comfortable with others knowing.
10. If you would choose to move your heart's desire closer to God's desires this week, what strategy would you take to accomplish that goal?

Daily Time with God Guide

Use the following questions to guide your Daily Time with God. Set aside time each day to pray, read your Bible, and seek God's mind. Days 1-5 follow up on this week's Sunday message and Day 6 assists you in preparing for the upcoming biblical message. Instead, you could simply read systematically through a book of the Bible, like Matthew.

October 31-November 5, 2011

Let's follow up on Sunday's lesson in James by considering five things that will help you discern if your heart's desire is in line with God's desire.

☐ Day One: Do your desires correlate with Scripture? Read Prov. 2:1-5 and Psalm 1. Scripture leads us to God, a person, who then shapes our mind and our will. Perhaps the greatest roadblock to maturity and the knowledge of God's will is a lack of effort to know God's Word. What can you do to know the Bible better?

☐ Day Two: Do your desires correlate with a sacrificial life? Read both Rom. 12:1-2 and Rev. 3:16. If you want God to bless your life and lead you clearly into the future, then you must lay your life down as a living sacrifice. Today, spend time laying each of your un-yielded desires before him. Tell him to take them away if they are not his desires and be willing to follow him completely.

☐ Day Three: Do your desires correlate with your conscience? Read Rom. 14:23 (look at the context) and 1 Cor. 4:4. When we are right with God, we have faith, we believe, our conscience is clear. Do you really believe what you want is what God would agree with if he were standing beside you today? Of course, if your mind hasn't been transformed through the Word and by the Holy Spirit, you can convince yourself to believe anything. Be wise.

☐ Day Four: Do your desires correlate with your prayers? First, “Are you praying?” When you are, your prayer life, your conversations with God, will produce peace as well as a clear sense of God's will. Read Eph. 6:18, Rom. 8:6, and James 1:5. Evaluate your prayer life today.

☐ Day Five: Do your desires correlate with godly counsel? Never make a big decision without the affirmation of godly people who know both God's ways and your life. Read Heb. 10:25, Prov. 13:20, and Prov. 15:22. Do you have people who help you discern God's leadership in your life? What are they telling you about your current decisions?

☐ Day Six: Read James 5:1-6. Ask God to prepare you for Sunday.