

COMMUNITY GROUP WEEKLY DISCUSSION GUIDE
WEEK OF JULY 13, 2009

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS
Love and Light

"...I was given a free rein to amuse myself beyond the strict limits of discipline, so that I lost myself in many kinds of evil ways, in all of which a pall of darkness hung between me and the bright light of your truth, my God. What malice proceeded from my pampered heart!"

–St. Augustine, *Confessions*

"...God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."

1 John 1:5b-7

THIS WEEK'S TEXT
Ephesians 5:3-14

RELATED TEXTS TO EXPLORE

1 Cor 6; Gal 5; Rom 1; Mt 24; Acts 28:16; John 12; 1 John 1-2; Is 60:1

STUDY GUIDE

- **What observations can be made about:**
 - Proper vs. improper conduct among the saints
 - The proper use of words
 - The inheritance of the kingdom of God
 - How people can be deceived
 - God's disposition towards "sons of disobedience"
 - The images of "dark" and "light" – especially as they relate to identity
 - What followers are supposed to do with "deeds of darkness"
 - The power of light to reveal and change
 - The call to "Awake"
- **What does each of these things mean? What did they mean for the church at Ephesus then, what do they mean for us now?**

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Use any or as many of these questions as will be helpful for your discussion.

- What has God spoken to you about this week regarding the sermon or passage?
- What does this passage reveal to us about Jesus?
- How does this passage enhance our understanding of the Gospel?
- What does this text mean for us as a community? Individually? How does it free us to be the people God intends for us to be?
- How do we need to live out the meaning of this text in our city?
- Do you identify yourself as Darkness or Light?
- Is your behavior in line with your identity, or are you posing as something else?
- Are there any "shadowy corners" of your life that you need to let light into?
- Were you compelled to confess anything this week? Is there anything you need to confess to another person?
- Do you find it easier to confess to God than other people? Why or why not?
- Can you relate to the joy of "Light Behaving as Light"? What is an area of your life that you are experiencing this or need to experience it?

"Words which do not give the light of Christ increase the darkness."
-Mother Theresa

MEMORY VERSES

Last Week: Eph 4:29

This Week: Eph 5:8

PRAYER FOCUS

For the Vision and Direction of the church (July):

Apostles Church wants to be a people who experience life-change together. We will seek to become more like Jesus as we experience the transforming grace and power of His Spirit.

In Response to the Text:

- Praising God for being in very nature Truth and Light
- Praising Christ for shining on us who were dead
- Confessing our impurity, corrupt speech, and ungrateful hearts
- Confessing our tendency to reject the law of God and seek out the darkness
- Thanking God from making us who were dark, light in the Lord
- Thanking God for giving us regenerate hearts, renewed minds and enabling us to walk in the light
- Asking God to make us a community of light that dispels darkness
- Asking God to make us a community that loves one another deeply from the heart and pursues righteousness together

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDY AND PREPARATION

- *Life Together*– Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- *The Radical Reformation*– Mark Driscoll
- *Confessions*– St. Augustine
- *The Pursuit of God*– A.W. Tozer
- *Irresistible Revolution*– Shane Claiborne

NEXT WEEK'S TEXT

Ephesians 5:15-21