

Small Group Questions for the Week of February 22, 2015

The following questions are taken from the book entitled John: 26 Studies for Individuals and Groups by N.T. Wright. Please do not feel compelled to ask every question that is listed below. You know your group better than the person writing the questions. Ask the questions that are best for your group, and questions that you yourself are comfortable answering.

1. Read John 4:43-5:9. Verses 44-45 in chapter 4 may seem a bit puzzling; it looks as though John is first saying that prophets aren't honored in their own country. But then the Galileans, Jesus' own countrymen and countrywomen, welcome him, remembering the things he had done in Jerusalem.

What does Jesus' response to the people in verse 48 tell us about how he perceived their welcome?

2. Why did Jesus perform signs if he didn't want people to follow him for the wrong reasons?

Note to Leader: Many saw the signs and followed him for the right reasons as well.

3. How are we today sometimes guilty of following Jesus for the wrong reasons?
4. How is the response of the official in verses 50 and 53 an example of what Jesus was desiring?
5. How might we follow the example of the official?
6. The pool of Bethesda was a well-known place of healing. It was in Jerusalem itself, just to the north of the temple mount area. But it wasn't just a Jewish healing place. The evidence suggests that pagans too regarded it as a sacred site. At one stage it was dedicated to the healing god Ascepius. (not a good thing)

How long had the man Jesus encounters been lying sick beside the pool (vs. 5)?

7. How does Jesus' command to "get up" give us a hint at what his new creation will look like?

Note to the Leader: This command given to the lame man in verse 8 sounds similar to the command that Jesus will one day give to all of us who have passed away. Read John 5:28-29. This statement made by Jesus in John 5:28-29 is said right after the lame man is told to get up and walk. Jesus' words "get up" in verse 8 give us a hint of the new creation that will come when Jesus tells all of us who are in our graves to "get up."

8. In verse 14 Jesus tells this man to stop sinning or something worse may happen to him. This man was lame for 38 years. What could be worse than that?

Note to the Leader: In verse 5:29, Jesus says that some will rise from their graves to eternal life, and some will rise to be condemned (the opposite of eternal life.) A similar scenario is described in Rev 21:1-8. Facing condemnation on Resurrection Day is infinitely worse than being lame for 38 years.

9. How does the healed lame man respond to Jesus' warning? (see verse 15)

Note to Leader: Unlike the father of the healed child in 4:53, the healed lame man does not respond in faith. He cares more about what the Jewish leaders might do to him. He actually rats out Jesus in verse 15 which leads to Jesus being persecuted. The healed lame man is led by his fear of men, rather than by faith in Jesus.

10. Can you relate to being led by fear rather than by faith in Jesus? How does this play out in your life?

Note: The last three questions are not from N. T. Wright's book.