

LIVING STONES DISCIPLESHIP GROUP



SECOND SEMESTER
UNIT 6



"[Y]ou yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1Peter 2:5

UNIT 6: Move Toward Jesus; Look Toward the Lost



IN THIS SESSION

- :: Moving toward Christ
- :: Looking toward the Lost
- :: Contextualizing the Gospel
- :: The Dangers of Contextualization
- :: Always Reforming

UNIT 6: Move Toward Jesus; Look Toward the Lost

// OPENING SCRIPTURE

"I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings."

1Corinthians 9:22b-23

// OPENING PRAYER

// FOLLOW-UP FROM PREVIOUS UNIT

Memory Verse ::

Homework :: Did everyone in the group complete this unit's work and activities (if applicable)?

UNIT 6: Move Toward Jesus; Look Toward the Lost

// The Bridge

:: Previous units have explored the missional call of every follower of Christ. This unit is meant to encourage us to move toward Jesus in personal application of biblical truths while simultaneously looking toward the lost with the hope of making disciples. This unit also serves as a bridge for the next stage of LivingStones.

:: Your group has spent the last 12 months discussing several fundamental truths of the Christian faith. But now what? What are we do with it? Knowing the truth is important. What we do with that truth is just as important.

:: Think back over the last 12 months. How has God used your group to grow your faith and increase Christlikeness in your life?

:: Looking forward to the next year, what are some areas of your life that still need growth?

// Moving Toward Christ

:: In Ephesians 4, the Apostle Paul explains the effects of God's truth on His people. **Read vv.11-16.** According to verses 13 and 16, what are the effects of being unified with God's people and increasing in the knowledge of Jesus? *(There are at least five.)*

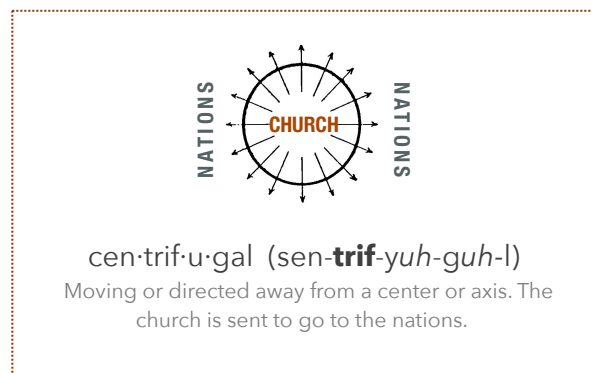
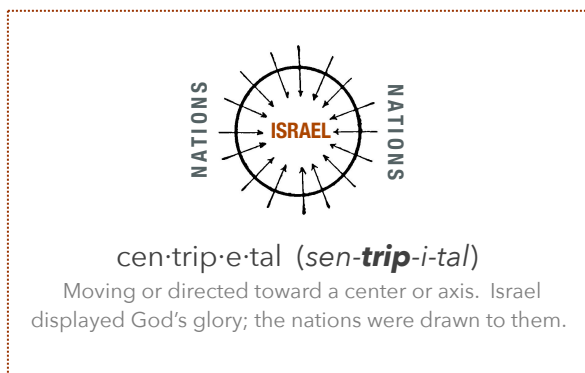
:: When we grow in knowledge of Christ, we become more like Him. **Read vv.17-24.** What does it mean to “**put off your old self**” (v.22) and “**put on the new self**” (v.24)? Explain some ways this has happened in your life.

:: There is little use in head knowledge unless it creates life change. The effect of seeing the glory of Christ in the gospel is to convict us of sin, draw us to Him, and cause us to become more like Christ. The point of learning God’s truth is to apply it to our lives.

:: Now consider what Paul tells us to do with our Christ-like maturity in verse 25. How does Christian maturity lead us to “**speak the truth with [our] neighbor**”?

// Looking Toward the Lost

:: Glory seen is glory shared. The result of moving toward Jesus is to look toward those who have not heard. In the Old Testament, mission was *centripetal*, flowing toward the center. Israel followed God’s law and displayed God’s glory to the nations. The nations were called to “come and see”. After Christ, mission became *centrifugal*, moving outward from the center. God’s people are called to “go and tell”.



:: As God’s people go and tell, they invade the culture in which they proclaim the gospel. The process of bringing the gospel to bear on the culture is called *contextualization*.

// In, But Not Of—The “Art” of Contextualization

:: When Interstate 75 was being laid through Kentucky and Tennessee, civil engineers had to cut a path through the Appalachian Mountain range. This colossal process was done in two stages. First, by drilling holes deep into the mountain rock. Then, by detonating explosives to sheer off the rock in smaller sections to be carried away. Both stages are necessary. Drilling alone does little. Without drilling, explosives only do damage to the face of the mountain.

CONTEXTUALIZATION:

The process of “giving people the Bible’s answer...to questions about life that people in their particular time and place are asking, in languages and forms they can comprehend, and through appeals and arguments with force they can feel, even if they reject them.”

- Tim Keller, *Center Church*

:: When sharing the gospel, we are confronting a mountain of resistance. Both drilling and detonating are necessary. The gospel does both. It drills into the culture and explodes the contradictions within its worldview.

:: Drilling is accomplished by communicating the gospel in terms coherent to a particular culture. Think of it like “speaking the language” of the culture. Detonating is accomplished by confronting the unbiblical premises of that culture with God’s truth. The Apostle Paul was a master at contextualization.

:: Read Paul’s address to the Athenians in **Acts 17:22-31**. Look for his method of contextualization. How did he drill (speak the language)? How did he detonate (confront with the truth)?

:: In what ways did Paul drill into the Athenian culture? How did he “speak their language”? Give Paul’s examples.

:: How did Paul detonate the Athenian worldview? How did He bring the gospel to bear on their 'religion'?

:: We see the same method used throughout Paul's sermons in Acts. He speaks differently and emphasizes different elements of the gospel depending on who he is addressing. He explains his method in **1Corinthians 9:19-23**:

“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”

:: What do you think Paul means, “**I have become all things to all people that by all means I might save some**”? What would this look like in *your* life?

// The Ditches of Contextualization

:: Contextualization is necessary and unavoidable, but there are dangers with contextualization. It is a road with ditches on both sides. Some Christians drill without detonating. They speak the language of the culture, but don't confront sin. Other Christians tend to detonate without drilling. They confront sin, but do not relate to the culture.

:: What are some dangers of drilling without detonating? (*i.e. Relating to the culture without calling out sin*)

:: What are some dangers of detonating without drilling? (i.e. Calling out sin without relating to the culture.)

:: Give some ways we can do both.

// Cultural Reform.

:: When God sent Israel into exile to Babylon, He told them:

“Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.” (Jeremiah 29:5-7)

:: The church shares commonality with Israel in exile. The church is also in exile (1Pe. 1:1; Jas. 1:1).

Like Israel, the church is to “**seek the welfare of the city...and pray to the Lord on its behalf**”. The church ought to address issues of sin and social injustice in their culture.

:: How is this done? There are many ways. But it starts with every Christian doing his/her part to be a productive member of society, to be involved in their community, to show hospitality to others, to sharing with those in need. Most importantly, cultural reformation happens when Christians proclaim the gospel and God saves souls. Revival is the greatest cultural reform.

:: What are some areas of culture *you* can be involved with to effect gospel-driven reform?

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PRAYER REQUESTS // PRAISE REPORTS

Go around the room and have *each person share a prayer request and/or a praise report. Members should commit to praying for these requests.*

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HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

:: Memorize the following verse(s):

"I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings."

1 Corinthians 9:22b-23

:: Use your break to think about ways you can contextualize the gospel into the culture around you. Begin to make strides toward leading a Bible study in your workplace, with a friend. Use the knowledge you've gain from the last 12 months to grow in Christlikeness and lead others to do the same.

:: Ensure you are able to attend the first meeting of the next semester.