

Word One Bible Study

How are You Treating the World?

by Ken Schurb

Text: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 for the Third Sunday after Epiphany, Lectionary Series B

OBJECTIVES

Participants will live as people whose lives are shaped by their destiny with God in Christ.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles

GROUP GUIDELINES

Form small groups of 4-6 people. Choose as leader the person whose birthday is the closest to today. The leader will keep the group moving through this study. Everyone should have the opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

1. When people greet their friends, they sometimes say, "How's the world treating you?" Share one of your recent pleasant answers to this question with the other members of the group.
2. Occasionally when people ask, "How's the world treating you?" the response they get is not so cheerful. Share a time when you were saddened, disappointed, or angered because of things that make this world repellent to you.

LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

1. Read 1 Corinthians 7:29-31. This passage faces an important fact, which is stated in two ways: "the time has been shortened" (verse 29) and "the form of this world is passing away" (verse 31). In view of this fact, the question arises: How are you treating the world?
2. In these verses, what are the five aspects of life in the world in which Christians obviously participate?
3. What is the point of the "as if" clauses in each of these five cases? (1 Corinthians 7:11, Ephesians 5:25). So what do these mean?
4. What exactly is the meaning of the phrase, "the form of this world is passing away?" (See 1 John 2:15-17; 2 Peter 3:9-13; Romans 8:18-23). What does this fact have to do with the five "as if's" in 1 Corinthians 7:29-31?

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

1. Why is it easy to become absorbed in this world? How can we avoid this trap?
2. Patients with terminal illnesses often say that the most important thing that dawns on them is not the quantity of time they have left to live, but a matter of quality: a new perspective on life. In what way is the Christian life like this? (See Romans 6:3-4, 8-10, 2 Corinthians 4:13-18.)
3. Why is it important that Christians live according to these two mottos?
 - a. Live each day as if it were your last day.
 - b. Live each day as if it were the last day.
4. How can Christians live according to these mottos? See Colossians 3:1-4.
5. Actively speaking of Christ with people, especially the unchurched, can help us focus on where our true home lies. Why or how?

CLOSING

Close by praying:

Almighty and everlasting God. . .as we are strangers and pilgrims on earth, help us by true faith and a godly life to prepare for the world to come, doing the work You have given us to do while it is day, before the night comes when no man can work. And when our last hour shall come, support us by Your power and receive us into Your everlasting kingdom. In Jesus' name. Amen. (The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941, page 13).

*Title from Gerhard Aho, Concordia Theological Quarterly 45 (October, 1981):300.

Originally published in Discovery Bible Studies 9, 1996.

Updated for youthESource in January 2014

youthESource is published on the Web by the LCMS Office of National Mission—Youth Ministry. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 South Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; 1-800-248-1930; www.youthesource.com. Editor: Sherrah Holobaugh Behrens. VOL. 12 NO. 1. January 2015.