

Crucial Questions

What is Essential?

CONNECT:

How have you seen God at work in your life in the last week?

PREPARE:

If we are to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, this week we are emphasizing the mind (as well as the heart and soul). Think of these doctrines or topics as “eating our theological vegetables”. Why do you think it’s important to study theology? [Hint: Ephesians 4:14]

STUDY AND DISCUSS:

Prosperity Gospel

- What is it?
- Read 1 Timothy 6:3-10. Why is dangerous to believe that if we have enough faith, we will be healthy, wealthy and happy?
- Read Romans 3:10-12.
- Read Matthew 6:31-33. How does this passage oppose the prosperity gospel?
- Explain how the lives of Jesus and Paul fit into the prosperity gospel? [Hint: they don't]
- Read Galatians 1:6-7.

The Prosperity Gospel enslaves and shames; the Gospel of Jesus sets us free!

Predestination versus Free Will (aka Calvinism vs. Arminianism)

Both believe in election, as it is in Scripture (Romans 8:28-29). The issue is how to respond to it.

Calvinism (Reformed Theology) emphasizes God’s Sovereignty.

Arminianism emphasizes free will.

Community Group Discussion Questions

Discuss the following ideas (TULIP):

Calvinism	Arminianism
T - Total Depravity: We are dead in our trespasses apart from Christ. (See Rom. 3:10, 8:7)	Yes, but prevenient grace (grace that precedes human decision) is for anyone and everyone.
U - Unconditional Election: God and God alone chose us, not because of anything we did. (See John 15:16)	God chose those who he saw ahead of time would respond to him. (See Eph. 2:8)
L - Limited Atonement: Christ made atonement with his death, but it is limited to the elect. (See Matt. 26:28)	Christ's death was sufficient and for anyone who responds in faith. (See 1 John 2:2)
I - Irresistible Grace: God's grace to save a person cannot be resisted. (See John 6:37)	People can choose to accept God's grace or resist it. (See John 5:39-40)
P - Perseverance of the Saints - "once saved, always saved" (See John 10:28)	It is possible to lose one's salvation. (See Matt. 7:21-23)

What we know is that the Bible does not contradict itself. If we don't understand something, we can be confident that the Bible is not wrong or contradictory, but our understanding of it is.

Free Grace versus Lordship Salvation

- Read Ephesians 2:8-9. Both views protect that passage, that faith is what saves you.
- **Free Grace** theology believes that it is grace and grace alone that saves you. Repentance is not necessary for salvation.
- Good works are not necessary for salvation.
- **Lordship Salvation** believes that good works naturally happen to one who has truly been saved. (See Acts. 2:38; James 2:14-20)
- Read Matthew 7:22-23, 3:8-9. How do these verses give insight to this discussion?
- How can the idea of free grace be dangerous to the church and to Christianity?
- Does Lordship Salvation mean that salvation is faith PLUS something?

RESPONSE:

Read the following quote. Why is it so important to not divorce the cross of Jesus with the Kingdom of God?

Community Group Discussion Questions

The kingdom and the cross are held together by the Christ—Israel’s messiah—who brings God’s reign on earth through his atoning death on the cross. The kingdom is the ultimate goal of the cross, and the cross is the means by which the kingdom comes. Jesus’ death is neither the failure of his messianic ministry nor simply the prelude to his royal glory, but the apex of his kingdom mission; the cross is the throne from which Jesus rules and establishes his kingdom.”

- Jeremy Treat

PRAY

Lord, help us expand our understanding of who you are as we grapple with doctrines, ideas and theology. Keep our hearts and minds focused on the true gospel and our salvation by faith, through your grace! Help us to be faithful to you and allow the transformation of our hearts and minds as we trust in you that will overflow into our obedience and works.