

Table group discussions: Personal Integrity

Table #	Report
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3	<p><i>Why are we only one step away from spiritual failure?</i> To live in fear of failure is not healthy. How to overcome that? <i>What do we mean by the word spiritual failure?</i> Too often it is focused on moral failure. Other kinds of failure are less obvious, but just as sinful: like pride, lack of faith, building your own church kingdom, not being close to Jesus <i>No one is exempt. What to do?</i> Prioritize intimate relationship to Jesus. Our own idols (ministry idols, speaking in big places, travel, get in between us and Jesus) need to be acknowledged and destroyed. <i>How to keep vigilant over our own heart, "guard our hearts"?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowing your own weaknesses, then setting your own boundaries</li> <li>- To guard your heart : don't disengage from worship, spiritual disciplines, your ministry passion</li> <li>- Accountability: individual failure is most often due to community failure</li> <li>- Being vulnerable in community is actually a protective process</li> </ul> <p><i>Differences between men and women?</i> The root causes are the same: Satisfying ourselves. The heart is deceitful. Acting in contrast to the love of Jesus. Getting influence, power. But some different manifestations, opportunities, environments, temptation industries. Ex: Pornography search is still 3:1 men women. NOTE QUESTION #5: <i>How to make this MC meeting more than a "good topic and discussion", but one that really brings outcomes that help us grow and change in this area when we go home?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cannot go too deep in these table discussions.</li> <li>- There are ways to get deeper with trained facilitators leading the table groups.</li> <li>- Guidance on how to ask questions that are more provocative towards change outcomes.</li> <li>- Make these kind of events not just a listen and discuss time, but also more community-building time with lots of time for prayer.</li> </ul>
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6	<p><i>Why are we only one step away from a spiritual failure?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We keep loading things on our plate and we don't focus on our foundation. We don't know when it will be one thing too many.</li> <li>- Lack of discernment in the decisions we make. We need to learn how to exercise good decision making.</li> <li>- The theological answer is that we are sinners.</li> <li>- False sense of maturity – the idea that we are overcoming our sinful nature.</li> <li>- Example of Uzziah, greatly helped until he was strong. Take heed lest we should fall.</li> <li>- We might think we are above that kind of temptation.</li> <li>- We take our relationship with God for granted because of the roles/positions that we hold.</li> <li>- If you don't seek the Lord first, it might show that you are confident about</li> </ul>

	<p>where you have been.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We need to hear from the people with whom we are serving/working</li> </ul> <p><i>Because nobody is exempt from spiritual failure. What can we do about it?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring that the people we are relating to are who they say they are.</li> <li>- We don't take time to just listen to the still, small voice of God.</li> <li>- The tyranny of the urgent: not taking time to withdraw/fast, etc. You must be intimately connected to the Lord.</li> <li>- Winnie-the-Pooh's "thinking place" where you can be still and know God.</li> <li>- You have to leave your phone at home when you seek this time. The expectation for instant response is high.</li> <li>- Accountability structures are great, but they are only as good as people are willing to be honest about their situation.</li> </ul> <p><i>The seed of failure is in our own heart! How can we keep vigilant over our own heart?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Marriage can be helpful – if there is a good marriage situation it can help.</li> <li>- Accountability, to have the courage to have a friend who we decide to be accountable to in our situation. There must be integrity in that relationship.</li> <li>- Ask, "What is God teaching me from his word this week?"</li> <li>- Have the courage to be accountable. In non-Western contexts, the leader is often seen in a confident/positive light and aren't as easily given to vulnerability.</li> <li>- The spiritual disciplines.</li> <li>- The "paradox of spirituality" is to say "we aren't doing well spiritually" because it sounds more spiritual than saying, "we are doing well."</li> <li>- Six questions: What is God teaching you? Who have you shared with? Who are you mentoring? Have you looked at anything that causes lust? Have you done anything financially that is dishonoring to God? Have you built yourself up at another's expense?</li> <li>- Cultivating personal boundaries. Learn "personal safety" – not out of fear, but to protect oneself. Nobody from opposite sex in a room, etc., these sort of boundaries help us.</li> </ul> <p><i>How are temptations different between men and women?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Where there is anger in a man, there is often pornography. Sexual sin creates other problems in a person's life.</li> <li>- Similar: pride, desire to control</li> <li>- Different:</li> <li>- Men: power, women and money, unemotional</li> <li>- Women: affection – not sex, response to kindness</li> <li>- Reaction to the failure is different: men will deny problems whereas women will readily get emotional and are more likely to admit issues.</li> <li>- In many societies, men are required to be macho, whereas women are to be soft. If they work outside of those paradigms there are cultural sanctions against it.</li> <li>- Women in leadership need to learn how to not feel a need to prove themselves, yet being able to appropriately assert themselves.</li> </ul>
7	<p><i>Why are we only one step away from a spiritual failure?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Our hearts are so deceitful. How do we know our own hearts? It is because we are so prone to deceit.</li> </ul> <p><i>Because nobody is exempt from spiritual failure, what can we do about it?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep your boundaries – make guidelines/rules and keep them</li> <li>- Usually people suggest accountability relationships – we can come up with rules that will help prevent, but won't necessarily guarantee failure. (E.g., of a colleague in close accountability circles, but still failed). Comes back to</li> </ul>

	<p>Psalm 15 – nurture the authentic spirit filled life that leads to integrity. There can be a lack of integrity in the processes of maintaining integrity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Reinforcing quiet time.</li><li>- Example of forged counterfeit bills – people are taught the truth, and then they know the counterfeit. Instead of emphasizing things to avoid, we should emphasize the positives (like personal prayer, spiritual disciplines, quiet time).</li><li>- Focus on integrity needs to be far more than sexual immorality. What about the other struggles? Integrity really means being the same no matter what the context.</li><li>- The sinkhole didn't just happen. Fault lines of apartheid went back to dividing the families when miners went to work. Fault lines in our character – if not dealt with becomes a greater problem. Is this part of the question of the “seed of failure being in our heart.” Pride can</li><li>- Grace is needed. If we cannot show grace to one another we will not create the kind of transparent, authentic community where failure can be addressed and prevented.</li><li>- Age group of 30-40's in terms of discipleship – appear to not be as concerned about encouraging each other towards holiness. There is a strong desire to encourage people in their strengths, but ignore obvious weaknesses.</li><li>- The greatest challenge is to be a disciple day after day.”</li><li>- Psalm 15 talks about worshipping the Lord (NLT) and yet the implication is that worship is a walk, or journey (vs. 2-5a).</li><li>- Isaiah 60 – who is high? He who is humble and obedient to my Word.</li><li>- As long as we think that integrity is lack of moral failure, we will never truly begin to address the issue. Grace awakening – Swindoll. Demonstrates the problem of judgmentalism in our midst.</li><li>- Authenticity – what youth look for – continues to be a need. Modeling our fault lines ... creating environments in which it is ok to talk about our fault lines and share what we are wrestling with. Sometimes it is easier to go to our “authentic communities,” what about going to the Lord. It is hard to have an authentic community if people are always compelled to give the right “spiritual” answer.</li><li>- We need to be dispensers or givers of grace. Grace filled communities that draw people in. Develop space for informal sharing – expand accountability.</li><li>- Not just avoiding the temptations, but reinforcing the positive: Philippians 4:8 think about what is good, pure, honorable.</li><li>- Community should also be a place where we can confront one another (in failure). “The Heresy of Niceness.” Who will help us address our blind spots?</li><li>- Confrontation needs to be in love and with humility.</li></ul> <p><i>Because the seed of failure is in our own heart, how can we keep vigilant over our own heart?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Develop our own markers – warnings – rules/guidelines</li><li>- Do we know our own temptations? Do I know what the triggers are that set me off? What are my boundaries?</li><li>- In what ways do we give ourselves permission to avoid or go around our rules/guidelines? The other thing is to ask ourselves, when am I most vulnerable?</li><li>- AA and other 12 step programs – also celebrate the triumphs.</li></ul>
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