

Study Hints for Thinking Further

International Bible Lessons

Deuteronomy 10:12-22; 16:18-20

Sunday, June 24, 2012

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be answers to the discussion questions, but hints a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why do you think some people say it bothers them when they learn that God requires them to “fear the LORD”? What might you tell them?

In some places, the love of God and the forgiveness of sins by God can be so overemphasized that some people have not given much thought to the importance of also obeying God and fulfilling their God-given responsibilities to God and others. Some think that God is so loving and forgiving, as shown in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, that there is no reason to fear God for He will always forgive them for wrongdoing no matter what they do. Some think that fearing the LORD is the opposite of loving the LORD, and they know they love the LORD and seek to obey the LORD so they do fear the LORD. Some have translated “fear the LORD” to mean “reverence the LORD.” However, to some people the word “reverence” does not seem to convey the idea that consequences will follow if someone chooses to live a life of disobedience and disrespect for God.

Perhaps some people need to be asked to consider the fact that God will discipline those He loves. Consider what the Spirit warned in the Book of Revelation: “I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent” (Revelation 3:19). If love for God will not motivate someone to obey God, then perhaps God will discipline them to motivate them to reconsider the way they are living, to repent of their sins, and to return to a life of loving obedience to God. Perhaps some need to understand that to “fear the LORD” means to consider the consequences to God, others, and themselves if they turn away from the LORD in belief or behavior. God has emphasized the fact that He executes justice and is impartial, which are aspects or attributes of God’s love for all people, and some people will only act justly and impartially if they fear the LORD, when they should act this way because they love the LORD and their neighbor as themselves.

2. Why is it important to tell people that God’s laws are for their “own well-being” or benefit?

Some people think that God’s laws are to restrain them from being happy or enjoying themselves fully; however, God’s laws are related to the way God created us, so we can live the happiest by knowing and obeying God’s laws. Obeying God’s moral laws, especially as revealed in the 10 Commandments, will bring happiness to God, others,

and ourselves, because God revealed His laws to promote the well-being of everyone. It is not the case that someone who believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior no longer needs to obey God's laws, for obeying God's moral laws will still benefit others and us. Jesus demonstrated the importance of obeying God. He showed how to obey God. He sent believers the Holy Spirit to help them obey God. So, the followers of Jesus Christ obey God for the same reason Jesus obeyed God; Jesus and His followers love God.

3. Why did God choose the Israelites “out of all the peoples”?

God needed to choose a nationality or people group that would be ancestors of His only begotten Son, Jesus the Messiah. God chose the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the tribe of Judah, and the descendants of King David to be the ancestors of His only Son. God created the Israelites from their father Abraham. Their descendant, Jesus, made them special. God gave prophecies and fulfilled them, God worked miracles in history through them, and God inspired a record of all of these events and His words so people could read the Bible and come to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. God did all of these things so He could bless all the peoples of the world.

4. Why did God tell the Israelites that He “executes justice” and “loves the strangers,” and told the Israelites to “also love the stranger”?

God “executes justice,” and gives justice to all. God also executes mercy, and because God loves us, God sent Jesus so He could remain just when He executes mercy to those who trust in His Son. The justice of God and the mercy of God are both attributes of God's love, and God loves all people. God “loves the strangers,” and God wants strangers to come to know Him, love Him, and trust Him. God wants the Israelites to also love the strangers as He does, so these strangers can come to know, love, and trust God after learning about God through their words and deeds. God did not want the Israelites to think they were so special that they did not need to consider the needs of anyone but themselves; if they began to live selfishly and self-centeredly, then strangers would not learn about the love of God from them.

5. What might happen to a business, country, church, government, or other organization when leaders or officers “distort justice” or “show partiality”?

People will come to understand that neither the leaders nor the organization can be trusted, and they will cease to respect them or “do business” with them. If possible, the people will try to correct the situation to bring about justice to the individuals or the organization that has behaved unjustly. Unfortunately, some who will try to correct a situation will do so only so they can receive the justice they want, or to bring justice to the person they want to correct, and they will not try to seek justice impartially for all or be just in their own behavior. Some think that the ends they seek will justify any means they want to use, and this always leads to the distortion of justice and partiality. God's objective moral law as revealed in the Bible is perfectly suited to the nature of individuals and organizations; therefore, it is also the standard for justice, and for the just, impartial, and loving treatment of others. For these reasons, we can respect God.

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