

Money, Sex & Power : An Introduction

Romans 12

The Role of the Church:

Not just teach Biblical knowledge

But to make disciples, which is about how we actually live.

You see, Ethics is the practical outworking of your theology, your beliefs.

Our actions speak louder than our words.

And our actions are the embodiment of our beliefs.

With this conviction, I believe that as your pastors,

we need to equip you with real life day to day beliefs

that you can translate into action.

Not all the applications will be obvious so that is when you need to be in tune

with the Holy Spirit through Scripture, Prayer & Counsel.

How to take this in.

We all come from our own family systems, cultures, world-views and traditions.

There are two things that will happen when we learn o follow Christ.

1. We resist - Because it isn't comfortable, because it's different, because it challenges us.
2. We interpret according to our experience & biases. This can be a good thing in that it allows for a broader understanding and perspective on Scripture but when we begin to impose our own view and values and overlay it over the Bible, we are in trouble.
3. We submit to Scripture - a double-edged sword that pierces us dividing our thoughts and motives. We learn the teachings of Jesus, put it in our hearts and through it the Spirit of God transforms us.

Last Caveat:

These are standards not to judge unbelievers but for those who follow Jesus.

Those who truly follow Jesus undergo a change of values and perspective.

We understand this as a matter of pilgrimage and process.

It is also a matter of obedience to Christ - He is either Lord of all or not at all.

It is in protracted disobedience that one loses their way.

All ethics are to be derived from the Scriptures as best as we can understand.

They function with a Biblical understanding of "Righteousness" which is based on good relationships and the way we treat people.

The Ten Commandments are the backbone of the OT. (Exodus 20)

The Sermon on the Mount is the Moral Expression of Jesus' Teaching.

(Matthew 5-7)

Understanding without condemnation or condoning.

We cannot share what we do not know or experience.

We invite others into life with Christ and we need to know what it is like.

Exercise:

1. Write out what you feel are the most important issues to address.
2. Share it in a small group
3. Collect and the pastoral team will work on addressing them from Scripture.

Money

Some Issues: Work, Taxes, Wages, Employee and Employer, Saving, Investing, Charity, Bribery, Business Ethics, Endowment, Wills, Debt, Borrowing, Lending, Tithing, Gambling, Sharing, Property, Communalism, Capitalism, Communism, The American Dream, Vocation, Class Conflict, Consumerism, Economics

Historic Vow: Poverty. Eg. Franciscan Reformation

Spiritual Goal: Simplicity - Contentment, Generosity

Sex

Some Issues: Singleness, Family, Sexual Education, Homosexuality, Transexuality, Promiscuity, Cohabitation, Divorce & Remarriage, Pornography, Prostitution, Abortion, Abuse, Sexual Slavery, Addiction, Politics & Sex

Historic Vow: Celibacy

Spiritual Goal: Faithfulness - Fidelity to God & Relationships

Power

Some Issues: Politics, Partiality, Fairness, Authority, Governance, Hierarchy, War, Pacifism, Euthanasia, Suicide, Capital Punishment, Forgiveness & Reconciliation, Apathy & Complacency, Activism, Social Disobedience, Citizenship, Addiction, Parenting, Nationalism

Historic Vow: Obedience

Spiritual Goal: Service - Humility

Prayer & Preparation

Richard Foster's, *Challenge of a Disciplined Life: Reflections on Money, Sex & Power.*

Prayer for yourself as you face the real challenges of discipleship.

Allow the Spirit of God to open up the things you need to.

This is not going to be easy or comfortable.

But this isn't that kind of church.

There is one other Historic Vow: Stability.

Spiritual Goal: To be at Peace - To be still.