

Small Group Study Guide

Getting Rid of Baggage |

From Sunday February 23, 2020

Appetizer:

Question: How many of you remember the story of Pinocchio? What do you remember most about the movie? What was impactful for you? I remember being terrified when the boys started turning into donkeys. The Disney version of Pinocchio was redemptive, in that Pinocchio was able to become a real boy when he put others before himself. In the original book, Pinocchio was quite a trouble-maker, where his maker called him “wretched” and he ended up dying a brutal death. **Do all stories have a redemptive end?**

A couple questions from the passage:

Read Romans 7 out loud to the group. **What stands out to you in the passage?** What do you think of Paul’s example of comparing our “death” to the law to a woman who can have another relationship with a man once her spouse has died?

What is the context of the passage? **What is the law that Paul is referring to?** Is it good or bad? What role does it play in our salvation?

Main Course:

Romans 6-8 are some of the most beautiful, and most complicated passages in all of Scripture. One of the main theological issues that arise is whether Paul, when discussing his wrestling with sin, was talking about his life before Christ or his life after Christ. What do you think? Why do you think this has been such a tension for theologians?

Question: At the end of the day, Paul uses language that we have all faced when it comes to wrestling with our unwanted baggage: we DO things that we really don’t want to do. And we DON’T do things that we DO want to do.

As Christians, we know we SHOULDN’T have to carry around extra baggage, and yet we do. And because of this, we often face immense guilt and shame over the baggage we carry.

To prove this, ask if anyone wants to confess their baggage to the group... 😊

To make it a bit more comfortable, talk about the kinds of “shadows” that people may have. Peter Scazzero describes shadows as “those thoughts and behaviours that, although are not your primary identity, have influence in your life.” Not all shadows are bad. **But what kind of shadows do people have that take away their identity in Christ?**

And to make it even more comfortable, talk about what kind of shadows Pinocchio allows into his life that pulled him away from becoming a real boy. 😊

The argument that Paul is making is that grace is really important in the midst of our struggles. Of course we want to be rid of sin in our life. But we are under a new law, the law of the Spirit. This is a law that doesn’t condemn, but empowers us to overcome the war that we continually have with sin.

Question: How is this good news for us? What does this mean for us when it comes to the battle of holding on to our unwanted baggage?

Dessert:

Challenge:

Have each person in the group read Romans 8:1-2 out loud, but insert their own name into the verse as an encouragement of what we have in Christ.

For example: *“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for **Jeff**, who is in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set **me** free from the law of sin and death.”*

The season of Lent begins on Wednesday, February 24th. Lent is a time for us to reflect on what Christ has done for us on the cross. As part of our reflection, Lent encourages us to give up something that hinders us in our relationship with God.

Have everyone in the group write down one thing that they will seek to give up during Lent. However, aim to give up something that has become unwanted baggage to you, so that you can seek to live “lighter” without this thing weighing you down.