

NAVIGATING THE CURRENT CLIMATE



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CONNECTION SUNDAY QUESTIONS

1. In this climate where hostility, inflexibility, devaluing others, and staunch division are the norm, why does our approach matter?
 2. We say “Jesus is King”, and “He is Lord”. So, how should that impact my attitude and desired approach in this climate, even with these issues that are often personal, hurtful or angering?
 - a. **Lord** noun - someone or something having power, authority, or influence; a master or ruler.
 3. How do I work through the affects of other people’s thoughts, words and actions on one hand, while also holding to the heart and response that pleases and represents God well?
 4. How do I advocate and stand on my convictions while also protecting the unity in the Body of Christ? (**Ephesians 4:2-6 NLT**)
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SERIES KEYS

1. Make pleasing God your TOP priority
2. PAUSE before we PUNCH & Check In before you act out
3. Value a biblical & Spirit-led approach
4. Be Real & Heal
5. Reflect Him not Them in Love, Wisdom, & Boldness
6. Leave Room For God (His vengeance, and His plan)

PART 1 - SCRIPTURES & POINTS

Romans 12:1-2

- We are to offer EVERY PART of the life we live as a sacrifice to what would be holy & pleasing to God. This includes difficult areas where we disagree with someone, we are triggered, we’ve been wronged, and when we need to speak up and say something.
- We’re called to resist the pattern of this world, renew our minds and be transformed, which positions us to discern and align with God’s will.

Philippians 3:17-21

- Align with a Godly pattern
- Recognize the reality of those who say or appear that they are of Godliness, but have Conduct that shows otherwise - they are *just* citizens of this world.
- However don’t respond according to their corruptness (don’t automatically “match energy”).
- Conduct yourself according to the pattern of your *higher* citizenship in heaven where King Jesus lives.

Points:

- We are called to change the atmosphere, not match it
- If I am going to navigate God’s way, I cannot compartmentalize God. He must be King over all, including my: opinion & View Points, Cause (Political party, country, flag), Experiences, Identity

Joshua 9:3-14

- They use their minds to come to what looks like well thought out, *reasonable* decisions that would make sense to anyone watching. But that was not enough to stop or give clarity to what was really going on
- So, they took action based on words, appearances, and what made sense to them, *but they did not inquire of the Lord*.

1 Samuel 30

- Justification is not God’s Authorization
- This is an urgent, high-emotion, crisis situation. Even the situational climate around him is at a fever pitch.
- David had every right to react, and the skills to be effective in his reaction - STILL DAVID PAUSED

BEFORE HE PUNCHED

- The pause is not passive inaction, it's turning to God *inwardly*, to align for action *outwardly*.

Moses

- Saw the persecution, oppression, and enslavement of his people.
- Had a GOD-GIVEN calling and passion to do something about it - but reacted in rage, his own strength, and his own timing.
- He had to flee which put him OUT OF POSITION to do what he felt called to bring change to. Delayed the help & deliverance for the people he was actually trying to help.
- Later in life he missed his own promise because he did the same thing when he was *justifiably* frustrated with the wrong behavior of the Israelites, but he acted out instead of doing it God's way.

Points:

- Build in the internal mechanism to check in with God FIRST - regardless of the situation, justified you feel, how much EVERYTHING in you wants to act etc.
- The enemy will use people's words and appearances to set a trap for us to react in our own power and forfeit victory
- Just because I have the right to, doesn't make it right to. My reaction is *not* inherently righteous
- I can have valid feelings but invalid reactions
- If I allow ALL my responses to be dictated by the patterns of this world - my power, authority and access to eternal results will be compromised.

PART 2 - SCRIPTURES & POINTS

Acts 6 - An example of identity-based inequities & mistreatment

- Them being THE CHURCH (Christians) was not the catalyst or context to ignore what was happening but THE REASON TO ADDRESS what was happening
- The Godly, Christian, Jesus-follower way of addressing the issue was not to tell them to ignore it, forgive, but to SYSTEMATICALLY and carefully address it

Psalms 34:18 (ESV), 1 Peter 5:7 (NIV)

- If you're hurting, frustrated, angry, hopeless, overwhelmed, God sees. He is NOT asking you to ignore, He is telling you to bring it to Him as your shepherd, father, and restorer of your soul.
- Don't fester in it yourself, wrestle with it, with God

Romans 12:1-2, 9-21, Proverbs 25:21-22

- We would all freely agree with verses 9-13, so we shouldn't stop our agreement with living verses 14-21
- The message around verses 14-21 are centered around conduct that does not mirror the wrong others do to us, but reflecting the character of God toward them instead.
- The connected verses in Proverbs remind us that there is REWARD from God when we respond this way

Proverbs 24:17-20, Matthew 5:43-48 (NASB)

- Do not gloat when your enemy falls, doing so will cause the Lord to turn His wrath from them
- Love your enemies proving you are sons of your Father (pattern) in heaven. His pattern is to allow the sun and rain on everyone - righteous and unrighteous. Reflecting His pattern brings reward.

Points

- My conduct, choices, and approach to please God are "In view of God's mercy", NOT in view of others.
- In view of who God is (mercy, goodness, reward, love), I must mind how I love & interact with others, specifically those who make it difficult to do so.
- Who I repeatedly choose (My PATTERN) in tough moments, will reveal who is God in that area
- Jesus ate with tax collectors & sinners - Tax collectors were part of the SYSTEM that hurt, stole from, and discriminated against Jesus' people - but Jesus still remained open enough to eat with them - in hopes of influencing and changing them.
- Although "forgiveness" and "do what is right" scriptures have been weaponized to victimize and gaslight, that does not make them any less true or what God requires. So, I have to cling to the belief that God will reward, even if "they" don't change.

- We must remember that the enemy will use what he knows will work to get us to lash out, lose our reward, question or walk away from God, distort truth, and negatively affect others.

PART 3 - SCRIPTURES & POINTS

Titus 1:1-11

- We once were foolish, deceived, full of malice, hating and hating one another, but God's kindness, love, and mercy in the form of Jesus SAVED US. SO in view of that mercy - be careful to devote yourself to doing what is good.
- Avoid foolish/useless controversies and *genealogies*
- Don't be a divisive person - such a person is warped, sinful and self-condemned

Points

- Is your approach IN THIS CLIMATE more productive or divisive
- Behind some people's words and actions that seem righteous is something more warped and prideful than profitable and redemptive.

Colossians 4:2-6

- DEVOTE yourself to prayer, be wise in how you act toward outsiders, make the most of every opportunity
- Conversations should be always full of grace, seasoned, so you may know how to answer everyone.

Ecclesiastes 10:12 ESV, James 3:13-18

- A wise man's words bring favor, a fools consume Him. If you are wise, show it by good conduct.
- Do not boast out of bitterness or self seeking - what is behind the speaking out, acting out, and advocacy. And, what is behind the calling out of other's wrongs and self-righteousness.
- There is a clear and defined contrast between earthly/unspiritual wisdom and Godly wisdom.

Points

- What God is asking of us must be poured into and empowered by prayer
- In this CLIMATE - the wisdom in how I use AND CONVEY my words is vitally important.
- When my words are full of grace and seasoned with the flavor of heaven I'm empowered to be EFFECTIVE
- Ask God to help me see these moments as opportunities to show who HE is through who I am
- When we choose to use our mouths foolishly, eventually - WE are the ones that are consumed
- True wisdom is not found just in what I know or say, but in how I conduct myself
- Wisdom is both a shield from traps, pitfalls, and MY OWN fallenness, and a weapon to bring about clarity, influence, progress, and results.
- ASK-Does my response, reaction, plan of action reflect God's wisdom & make the most of the opportunity?

Colossians 4:3-4

- You can ask God for the open door to speak, and for the help to be clear and effective
- Pausing before we Punch is not just to get the Ok or approval but for insight, wisdom, strategy and power to be effective.
- If you feel Uncertain, insecure, ill-equipped - being aligned with Him helps us receive His power in our words and actions
- **Moses** - in a volatile conflict, confronting the powers that oppressed and enslaved his people, was uncertain and insecure, but was supposed to trust God to empower His mouth and actions

Luke 21:10-18, Matthew 10:19-20, Matthew 22

- Do I see these moments as just an opportunity to be right, or as an opportunity to show HIM
- We should have a boldness because of God's willingness to give us effective responses and what to say

Romans 12: 19, Hebrews 10:31 AMP

- In your approach and response, leave room for God's vengeance and judgement, but also His plan
- Israel wanted the Messiah to come destroy their enemies with military force, God wanted to come to change them and make them his own through His love. They rightly saw the Messiah as their warrior king but misunderstood who His true enemy was
- My way may feel better - But GOD's way works better
- Is it time for God's wrath, or time for an opportunity - what if God's first resort is not His Wrath, but to USE US to address and defeat the SIN Behind what is happening?
- Sometimes leaving room for God means following His direction to remove ourselves from the situation

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Series Keys

1. Commit to please HIM (no matter what, because He truly is my King)
2. We must learn to PAUSE before we PUNCH & Check In before you act out
3. Commit to a Spirit-led, Biblical Approach:
 - a. Be Real & Heal
 - b. Reflect Him not Them
 - i. His Love
 - ii. His Wisdom
 - iii. His Boldness
 - c. Leave Room For God
 - i. His Vengeance
 - ii. & His Plan

Reiterate - not about getting it perfect

HOPE

How do we fight to maintain hope when the world, situations and people seem to never change or even just get worse?

1 - Things have been worse and God has still told His people to hope. So it being worth it or a luxury is independent of the severity of a climate or its probability of improvement.

2 - It is a matter of where we put our hope.

- Is my hope FIXED on a specific type of outcome, or on/in Him. The bible tells us in multiple places that if we put your hope/belief in the Lord - we will not be disappointed or put to shame.
- Sometimes the retention of hope is due to a gain in perspective not a change in circumstance.
 - Proverbs 24:13-14 - CSB 13 Eat honey, my son, for it is good, and the honeycomb is sweet to your palate; 14 realize that wisdom is the same for you. If you find it, you will have a future, and your hope will never fade.
 - So when our eyes/perspective is on Him (Psalm 34:5) He can give us the right perspective, show us where our expectations are misplaced, and even show us where He is moving that we may not be seeing.

3 - Things will not get better, worse, or stay the same.... they will get better, worse, AND stay the

same.

Suffering, pain, sin (including racism), will always remain, and will always plague humanity. But at the same time, there will also always be things to look at and experience that will show us that certain people or situations have changed or gotten better.

Jesus at with tax collectors who by in large would not change - for Zacheus

He engaged with Pharasees for Nicodemus.

I have to believe that God will reward, even if THEY don't change

4 - You may have seasons of recouping to reingage.

- The trouble is not necessarily crawling under a rock for a season, but being unwilling to come out when it is time.