

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) Isn't it easy to get caught up in our own 21st Century culture of educationalism and intellectualism? While there is nothing wrong with education or intellectual pursuits, they can easily replace God. Have you ever come to a point in your life where your faith in God and your education came into conflict with one another? What did you do?
- B) Jesus points to the people's obsession with popular teachers (and the culture of teachers who want popularity) as being problematic. This kind of culture actually steals glory from God, and is not righteous. Do you feel that our culture has any parallels to Jesus'?
- C) Jesus lived in a world where knowledge was king. It was almost as if the knowledge of the Law was more important than actually following the Law. Sometimes I become more satisfied with my study of the Bible, than in actually doing what it says (having a real, authentic, personal relationship with God). Do you face this same type of "disconnect"?
- D) Can you think of a situation where all outside appearances looked as though someone was clearly outside of where God wanted them to be, but when you found out more about the situation, you actually found yourself completely reversed in your thinking? How can we practice "not judging according to appearances, but according to righteousness?"
- E) Sharing about this next item will require a total commitment to listening, grace and patience by all group members. Sometimes we keep situations in our own lives hidden and secret (fertile soil for enemy attack), because we are afraid of what others will think. We are afraid of snap judgements and gossip about our lives. If you feel comfortable, can you share about something along these lines in your own group for prayer and accountability? Seek truth, find Jesus...

True Glory

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 14th, 2004 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**HE WHO SPEAKS FROM HIMSELF
SEEKS HIS OWN GLORY; BUT HE
WHO IS SEEKING THE GLORY
OF THE ONE WHO SENT HIM,
HE IS TRUE, AND THERE IS NO
UNRIGHTEOUSNESS IN HIM.
~JOHN 7:18 (NASB)**

1) The Idol Of Education

- A) Jesus Christ is in "the midst of" the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:14). Up to this point Jesus has avoided association with his brothers (7:6-10), come secretly to Jerusalem (7:10), and moved in a reclusive manner amongst the people at the Feast (7:11-13).
- B) Jesus waits until "halfway" (NIV) through the Feast, walks into the middle of the temple court (where discourse often took place), and begins to publicly teach (7:14). Why?
- C) Jesus' teaching shows such depth and learning, the people are "astonished" (ἐθαύμαζον/ethaumazon -- wonder, surprise,

astonishment). The phrase "How has this man" (7:14) carries a contemptuous, negative tone (7:14). Their astonishment and contempt come from a culture of rabbinical schools where famous teachers and their disciples were well known to all the people (D.A. Carson, *The Gospel of John*, Pillar N.T. Commentary, Page 311).

- D) The people do not know who He is, because Jesus has not been in Jerusalem for at least 6-12 months, and has not taught publicly before in Jerusalem. Paraphrase, "Who is this new teacher, we do not know him, he has a lot of chutzpah to just waltz in here and start teaching..."
- E) "How this exclamation of theirs exposed the state of their hearts! It was not their consciences which were exercised, but their curiosity that was aroused. It was not the claims of God they were occupied with, but the schools of men. It was not the discourse itself they were pondering, but the manner of its delivery that engaged their attention." (A.W. Pink, *Gospel of John*, Page 382).

2) Glory For Me, Or Glory For God?

- A) Since the people have raised the question of Jesus' competency as a teacher, He answers their inquiry with a clear claim that His message is divine ("His who sent Me," 7:16). He would have been discredited if He claimed His teaching was His own, but doesn't give credit to men, either. He is God's instrument, teaching "Son" (Hebrews 1:2).
- B) Rather than expound on His qualifications as a teacher, Jesus

raises the question as to the competency of the people as hearers (7:17). He wonders aloud if the people are more interested in education, or following God's will.

- C) Christ drives a stake through the heart of the peoples' "educational idolism" (7:18). Christ is totally committed to seeking God's glory, not His own. The authenticity of the message is that Christ is true (John 14:6). He calls the people to test their teachers, with truth and glory being the ultimate measure of authenticity (7:18).

3) Judge According To Righteousness

- A) Jesus indicts the people as being lawbreakers, because there were some who wanted to kill Him (the Jews, John 5:18). He now focuses His comments on those who would remember His miracle at the Bethesda pools from John 5 (7:21).
- B) Those people who were not around, or were unaware of the Bethesda miracle, respond that Christ must be under demonic influence (7:20). But Jesus hones in on those who want to kill Him, and reveals who He really is to the entire crowd.
- C) Jesus argues for merciful activity having Sabbath precedence in relation to the Law of Moses. Paraphrase: "Circumcision only heals a member of the man, but I have healed the whole of man, why are you angry with me?" (7:22-23).
- D) Don't judge (this situation) superficially, look deeper and judge according to truth (7:24). If you will seek the truth in faith, you will find Me and experience the true Glory of God!