

DISCUSSION GUIDE :: WEEK 5

MISSING PIECES
WHERE IS AWE?
ISAIAH 6:1-5
04/09/2017



MAIN POINT

The wonder of having a relationship with God is only found if we have a sense of the awesomeness of God.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What three words come to mind when you hear the word “God”? Was “glory” one of the words you thought of? Why or why not?

What would you say if someone asked you to describe God’s “glory”?

How should we respond when we are confronted with God’s glory?

In an effort to make God more relatable, we tend to highlight the relationship we can have with God. And that’s not bad—that’s good! But the wonder of having a relationship with God is only found if we have a sense of the awesomeness of God.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 6:1-5.

Why do you think Isaiah mentions that he had this vision in the year that King Uzziah died? Compare the authority and power of King Uzziah with that of the Lord.

What are seraphim? How did they worship the Lord?

Seraphim are angels. Great and good though they themselves are, these angels worshiped God in humility. By covering their feet and faces, these angelic beings were acknowledging their unworthiness to be in God’s presence. They praised God for His holiness and glory. They proclaimed that the earth is filled with His glory.

Why do you think the seraphim spoke the word “holy” three times? What does this communicate about the nature of God?

How does your understanding of God's holiness compare to Isaiah's experience?

In the presence of God, the Seraphim cried out, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty." The Hebrew word translated holy comes from a root that means "to separate" or "to cut off." By declaring God to be "holy" three times, the Seraphim were acknowledging the perfection or completion of God's holiness. This reminds us that there is no one holy like the Lord (1 Samuel 2:2).

What measures could we take to guard against minimizing God in our thinking?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 6:5.

Isaiah 6:5 records the emotional and spiritual response of Isaiah to the vision of God's holiness. Isaiah was convicted of his sinfulness and the wickedness of his fellow citizens in Judah.

What three reasons did Isaiah give for saying "Woe is me, for I am ruined"? In what ways are we like Isaiah in each of these statements?

Have you ever reflected on how truly sinful you are when compared with God? How does this make you feel about yourself? About God? About your relationship with Him?

Isaiah was truly in awe of God. What would it look like for you to be in awe of God this week?

Isaiah's vision of God's holiness had a profound effect on him. Our understanding of God's holiness should dramatically impact our lives as well. God's holiness is too profound for us to really wrap our minds around, but when we get just a taste of it, we are humbled by our sin and aware of our dependence on Him. This is what Isaiah experienced when he described himself as "a man of unclean lips" (v. 5). Like Isaiah, we must repent in acknowledgement of our personal sinfulness.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What affect should God's holy and glorious character have on the words we speak in worship?

What affect should God's holy and glorious character have on the choices you make this week?

How might unconfessed sin keep us from seeing and delighting in God's glory? What do you need to confess and repent of today following Isaiah's example?

PRAY

Pray that God would reveal His holiness in a powerful way to your group and all of our church. Pray that in response to God's holiness, all would be humble, repentant, and filled with worship. Pray that your group would grow together by encouraging one another to live in awe of the glory and holiness of God.

COMMENTARY

ISAIAH 6:1-8

6:1. The years of Uzziah's reign were also a time of unfaithfulness by the people of Judah. Empty ritualism and hypocrisy characterized their worship. The death of Uzziah ended a long period of stability and created the potential for a national crisis.

Isaiah saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne. The high and lofty throne was in the temple. Being on the throne emphasizes the Lord as the true King of Judah and being in the temple emphasizes His holiness. Judah had lost its earthly king, Uzziah, but the true King is always on His throne.

6:2. Isaiah saw seraphim standing above the Lord. Ancient oriental kings surrounded themselves with a court of servants, and the Lord appeared in a similar way to Isaiah. The word "seraphim" ("burning ones" in Hebrew) is the plural of "seraph."

6:3. The seraphim called to one another in a responsive, or antiphonal, chant. The key characteristic of God lauded by these angels was His holiness. "Holy" is repeated three times for emphasis. Holy is the key adjective in describing the uniqueness of God. Holiness incorporates the sum total of His perfection. Holiness describes the presence of complete perfection and the absence of any imperfection.

6:4. The seraphim's hymn rocked the foundations of the heavenly temple. The smoke that filled the temple probably came from incense and added the sensory experience of smell to Isaiah's vision.

6:5. Isaiah's response to these heavenly sights and sounds was an overpowering recognition of sin. Isaiah looked at the Lord and then looked at himself, and his conclusion was "I am ruined." Isaiah referred to his unclean lips, representing complete sinfulness