

C3 LEADERS' QUESTIONS

F2022-WEEK 10

11/6/22

Getting Started with a Warm-Up:

- "What Is the History of Halloween?"

Halloween is one of the most popular holidays in the United States and certainly one of the most profitable. An article published in USA Today estimated that Americans spent over nine billion dollars on Halloween decorations, parties, and events in 2018.

Now that number dipped significantly in 2020 in the heart of the Covid-19 pandemic, however, one statistics website forecasts that Americans will again spend close to 10 billion dollars in 2021 on Halloween.

Needless to say, October 31 has become synonymous with many popular traditions. Pumpkin carving, costumes, trick-or-treating, bonfires, carnival games, mazes, haunted houses, decorations, and candy are some of the more light-hearted and even family-friendly activities enjoyed during the month of October. (Ryan, J. Christianity.com, accessed 11/4/22, <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/holidays/what-is-the-history-of-halloween.html>)

- Why do you suppose people including Christians spend this much time and effort in celebrating this day?

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Getting Down to Business:

The following questions are following this format: Scripture/Observation, Application, and Prayer (SOAP).

1) Scripture/Observation:

- A. Read Acts 9:13. Who are the saints? Are there saints who are still alive today?

Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem." (Acts 9:13 NKJV)

Ananias referred to the believers in Jerusalem as "saints" (set apart ones), which is the equivalent of those who call on the Lord's name. This is the first time that Luke used the name saints for Christians in Acts. (Constable, Thomas L. 2022. "Notes on Acts. 2022 ed." Soniclight.com, accessed 11/4/22, <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/acts.pdf>).

- B. Read 1 Timothy 2:5. According to scripture why should we only pray to God and not to his saints?

For, There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5 NLT)

The God-man is the one and only mediator of the New Covenant between God and people who provides salvation man-ward and facilitates prayer God-ward. This is something that people have found hard to accept throughout history. In Paul's day the Jews looked to Moses (Gal. 3:19) and/or angels (Heb. 2:5) as mediators, and the Gnostics looked to intermediary deities (aeons). In our own day Roman Catholics and others look to Mary and dead saints for mediatorial

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benefits, and Buddhists look to their ancestors. Spiritualists look to mediums and spirit guides to connect them to the spirit world. Nevertheless the teaching of verse 5 is clear: the only mediator between God and people is the man Christ Jesus (cf. John 14:6). (Constable, Thomas L. 2022. "Notes on 1 Timothy. 2022 ed." Soniclight.com, accessed 11/4/22, <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1timothy.pdf>)

- C. Read Romans 2:11 and James 2:8-9. How can these passages be used to justify not idolizing or praying to saints? (compare with 1 Cor. 3:4-7)

For God does not show favoritism. (Romans 2:11 NLT)

8 Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 9 But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law. (James 2:8-9 NLT)

4 When one of you says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says, "I follow Apollos," aren't you acting just like people of the world? 5 After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God's servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. 6 I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. 7 It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow. (1 Corinthians 3:4-7 NLT)

The third principle by which God judges is that He will treat everyone evenhandedly (v. 11). There is equal justice for all ("no partiality") in God's court. (Constable, Thomas L. 2022. "Notes on Romans. 2022 ed." Soniclight.com, accessed 11/4/22, <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/romans.pdf>)

V 2.8, James did not mean that Christians should avoid honoring the rich but that we should love everyone and treat every individual like we would treat ourselves (Matt. 7:12; cf. Lev. 19:18)...V 2.9, In this verse James used the verb form ("show partiality") of the same Greek word that he used in verse 1, namely,

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prosopolepteo. The type of preferential treatment that James dealt with in this pericope (section of text, 2:1-13) violates the royal law, because it treats some as inferior and others as sources of special favor (cf. Acts 10:34)...(Constable, Thomas L. 2022. "Notes on James. 2022 ed." Sonlight.com, accessed 11/4/22, <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/james.pdf>)

IT TAKES ALL SORTS (1 CORINTHIANS 3:1–9)

We noted above that the main problem in the Corinthian church was that of factionalism. Cliques were forming under the banner of Paul's name versus the name of Apollos, another missionary to the Corinthian church. Paul will have none of this. He and Apollos are simply servants. Although they have different roles, neither of them is more valuable than the other. The planter (Paul) and the irrigator (Apollos)—to use an agricultural metaphor—are equally vital to the success of the harvest, and neither is responsible for the growth of the crop. That is entirely God's doing. The various workers have a common goal in mind (a bounteous harvest), but they have different tasks in line with their abilities and calling. All are necessary and no one can do every necessary task.

Paul, in other words, is aware of the importance of diversification and specialization. In his famous 1958 essay, "I, Pencil," economist Leonard Read followed the course of the manufacture of a common pencil, making the point that no single person knows how to make one. It is actually the product of several sophisticated processes, only one of which a given individual can master. By the grace of God, different people are able to play different roles in the world's workplaces. But specialization at times leads to interpersonal or interdepartmental factionalism, poor lines of communication, and even personal vilification. If Christians believe what Paul says about the God-given nature of different roles, perhaps we can take the lead in bridging dysfunctional divides in our organizations. If we are able simply to treat others with respect and value the work of people different from ourselves, we may be making significant contributions to our workplaces. (Theology of Work Bible Commentary, accessed 11/4/22, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Cor.+3%3A4-7&version=NLT>)

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2) Application:

- A. Why is it important to teach our children about the sacrifices and contributions that the saints of history have made? (Thoughts: The apostle Paul who wrote 13 books of the Bible. Moses who delivered Israel and presented the 10 commandments. Billy Graham and his evangelist ministry. CS Lewis with his contributions to apologetics in defending our faith.)
- B. How can we do a better job remembering and honoring saints past and present? (Idea: should we dedicate a Sunday to honoring the memory of saints who have impacted the church and our lives?)

3) Prayer: As you pray, thank God for the faithful saints who He has used in the life and history of His church. Thank Him, as well, for those He has placed in your life who have introduced you to the faith and helped to strengthen your faith.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. (Hebrews 12:1 NLT)