

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Share with the group about a time when you lost your peace.
- Read Galatians 4:7 and John 8:35 in different translations and memorize the scripture passages from your favourite translation.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of times when you judged yourself or didn't feel good enough about yourself. Now ask God to show you His grace in this area.

PRAYER

As a group, ask God to help each one to live in peace, even when the circumstances are overwhelming.



WEEK 4

CONNECTION

What is your favourite bread topping? What is the strangest combination of toppings you've had on your bread? Share this with the group.

WORD

This is the fourth week of our *Son or Slave* series. In the previous weeks we saw how the Law of religion constantly judges us and brings us back to a place of slavery.

Christianity is not a religion but a Father-child relationship with God. As children of God we are accepted by God because of His abundant grace and not because of our works. For this reason there is no condemnation when we come before the Father.

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

1. Bread of life.

Have you ever noticed how many times the Bible mentions stone(s) and bread? Stone mostly refers to the law of working hard where bread refers to the Jesus or the Word of God.

- The Israelites worked as slaves in Egypt by making bricks and chopping stones. (Ex 1:14)
- The law was written on tablets of stone. (Ex 32:15)
- During Jesus' temptation in the wilderness Satan said to Him: 'if you are the Son of God, command these stones to turn into bread' (Matt 4:3), in other words: do as I say and the law will become as bread to you.
- Jesus asks in Matt 7:9 'julle as ouers sal tog nie vir julle kinders as hulle brood vra, klippe gee nie.'

When we try to please God by keeping the law, it is hard work and we fall short every time. God's mercy works in a different way - we do not have to work hard to earn God's favour. We are rewarded because of the work Jesus did on the cross, undeserved by God's abundant grace.

What causes us to be unclean?

The Pharisees did everything in their power to keep the law.

They asked Jesus in Mark 7:5 the following: *"Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"*

Jesus answered them: *"Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me'".*

It is not what enters your body from the outside that makes you unclean, but that which proceeds from you - what you say and do - that makes you unclean. (Mark 7:6,7,15)

It is our words that make us unclean. We create a menu for ourselves with what we say. The true state of our heart are revealed when there is a constant flow of judgment and negativity that flows over our lips. If our hearts are far from God we will never be able to work hard enough to please God, even if we follow the law meticulously.

Peace

At times we try to hard to do the right things and receive God's grace and in this way to enter into His provision. We don't often times realise that the secret simply lies in us living in peace. When we argue with one another or get involved in disputes, it is not possible for us, just as it wasn't possible for the disciples, to see the provision of God.

Markus 8:14-20

When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand:

"There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.

"If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable.

So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him,

"because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?"

And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man.

Fillipense 4:7,8

and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy; meditate on these things.

Keep your peace, remember what God did and God's provision will be clearly visible.