

Leaders Guide: 5/5/13 Psalms 49

1. Read straight through Psalm 49. What does this psalm teach us about money and death?

-Have your group tell you where they found their answers in the Psalm. If possible, have them relate their findings to their own lives or explain how the same teachings would apply to a modern context.

2. In Psalm 49:2, the psalmist directs his words to “low and high, rich and poor together.” He then goes on to describe the ultimate irrelevance of wealth. Why is this message important for both the rich and the poor?

-The necessity for the rich to hear this song should be readily evident, but some might have trouble seeing why the poor would also need to hear it. Consider the unbiblical notion that poverty, for its own sake, produces holiness (which is simply relying on a *lack* of material wealth for salvation, rather than on Christ). Reference 2 Corinthians 8:1-15 as a biblical example of how the wealthy and poor should act together within the church. It’s clear that those with “abundance” within the church are not more or less holy than those with “need.”

3. Psalm 49:7-9 has a tremendous amount of wisdom. Summarize it in your own words.

-Look for members of your group to synthesize the content of the Psalm into a theme that they can take with them and remember easily. Summaries should include the Psalm’s major points of emphasis (No amount of wealth/fame can save a man from death, a self-reliant man is no different than a beast in death, God is the one who ransoms us, etc.).

3b. Now read Psalm 49:15 and Mark 10:45. How do these verses help us understand Psalm 49:7-9? When we put them together, what is emphasized?.

-The emphasis of your group should center around the ransoming effects of Christ. That is the universal takeaway from this passage.

3c. Re-read Psalm 49:7. What role do you play in the lives of unbelievers that are in your close circle of influence? Who are they specifically?

- Consider the two common errors in our relationships with unbelievers: failing to offer them the Gospel entirely or trying to “fix” them through behavior modification and effort. Note the events of Pentecost in Acts 2-verse 41 talks about unbelievers accepting *his* (Peter’s) word, but verse 47 affirms that it was the Lord that was adding to their number. Encourage members of your group to hold the need for obedience in witnessing to unbelievers in careful balance with the reality that it is God who will stir in their hearts.

4. Read Psalm 49:13 and Romans 1:32. In what ways can we “know” the end of wealth, yet still “approve” the power of it in our lives and hearts? How do we protect our hearts against leaning in the direction of this approval?

-Look for both active and passive means of giving approval. James 2:1-13 gives a clear warning against approving the wealthy at the expense of the poor. Note the reason that James gives to abhor partiality (or to not “approve” the power of wealth in our lives): V. 1 “...as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.”