

Small Group Questions for the Week of February 15, 2015

The following questions are taken from the book entitled John: 26 Studies for Individuals and Groups by N.T. Wright. Please do not feel compelled to ask every question that is listed below. You know your group better than the person writing the questions. Ask the questions that are best for your group, and questions that you yourself are comfortable answering.

1. Read John 2:1-12. Running out of wine was not just inconvenient, but a social disaster and disgrace. The family would have to live with the shame of it for a long time to come; bride and groom might regard it as bad luck on their married life. What is Jesus' first response when his mother asks him to do something about this crisis (v 4)?
2. In Jesus response to his mother he says, "My time has not come yet." What do you think Jesus means by this statement?

Note to Leader: Jesus was likely alluding to the fact that providing wine was the responsibility of the bridegroom (see v. 9-10). Since Jesus is not the bridegroom at this wedding, then it was not his time to provide the wine. However, Jesus is the true (or ultimate) groom for the Church (which is described as the bride in Rev 21:2.) In fact, John the Baptist will identify Jesus as the bridegroom of the Church (see John 3:29.) By saying "My time has not come yet" Jesus is saying that I am not the bridegroom at this wedding, but rather my wedding, is another time. (This question is not taken from N.T. Wright's book.)

3. What might have motivated Jesus to act despite the fact that he believed his "time" hadn't come yet?

Note to Leader: By fulfilling the role of the bridegroom at this wedding, Jesus highlights that he will ultimately fulfill the role of bridegroom for the Church.

4. The Old Testament commonly compares God to a bridegroom and Israel to his bride. John's readers would thus recognize a wedding as a foretaste of the great heavenly wedding feast in store for God's people (Rev 21:2.) The water jars, used for Jewish purification rites, are a sign that God is doing a new thing from within the old Jewish system, bringing purification to Israel and the world in a whole new way. How does the image of a wedding help us understand what's in store for God's people?

5. The word John uses for “clue” is sign (v. 11). He is setting up a series of signposts to take us through his story. They are moments when heaven is opened, when the transforming power of God’s love bursts in to the present world. How is this sign at the wedding an example of the transforming power of God’s love?
6. The transformation from water to wine is of course meant by John to signify the effect that Jesus can have on people’s lives. Where do we see Jesus’ transforming power at work in the world today?

Note to Leader: The transformation of water to wine is likely meant to signify other things in addition to the effect that Jesus can have on people’s lives.

7. How often do you think of the future wedding with Jesus Christ that is reference in Rev 21:1-4?

Note to Leader: Some might think of the future with Jesus often. Some might hardly ever think of our future with Christ. Ask why they do, or why they don’t think of our future with Jesus. (This question is not taken from N.T. Wright’s book.)