



Hot Seat

Conversations on Controversies

May 23 -
June 27





HOT SEAT

A STUDY

on Controversies

May 23 - June 27

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Hot Seat

When I was in Youth Ministry, one of our favorite games to play was HOT SEAT. It's quick, cheap, simple and yet fun. Place a chair in the middle of the group, select one person to sit in said chair, and then allow the group to barrage the poor individual with questions. "Who are you sweet on?" "Who was your first kiss?" "What's the most embarrassing thing you've ever done?"

You see why it's called Hot Seat, right? In many ways it feels like an interrogation. It makes you nervous, possibly even causes you to sweat. But, as far as I know, no one has ever died from Hot Seat. In fact, it usually ends up that the person has a lot of fun and everyone else gets to know them a bit better. Like I said, it was one of our favorite games to play.

So, over the next several weeks at City Church, we will pull out a chair and place it in the middle of the congregation. We will begin formulating questions in our mind. Then we will point to the seat and ask God to sit. It's a time when we get to ask Him the difficult questions that we almost all struggle with. We get to hear from Him about topics that the church often times gets wrong. And in the end, hopefully, we will get to know God a bit better. Come ready to hear from God on topics ranging from, Singleness, Depression, Finances, LGBTQ+, Suffering, and Faith. Come ready to learn. Come ready to worship.

In Him,



Hot Seat

Why Aren't You Married Yet?

1 CORINTHIANS

7:6-9

7:17-40

May 23

Why Aren't You Married Yet?

Everywhere you look it seems as if the world prefers pairs over singles. From socks and shoes to couples and chopsticks, you're reminded that one seems incomplete. One shoe doesn't do you much good in a race. One chopstick isn't much help with your rice bowl. Even the Bible says, "It is not good for man to be ALONE...I will make him a helper (woman)."

If you're one of the 240 million singles in China this can be quite discouraging at times. It can feel as if YOU are incomplete, as if YOU haven't quite arrived at adulthood yet, as if YOU are that lost slipper of Cinderella desperately trying to find the matching pair so you can experience your "happily ever after."

This may be how you feel, but is it true? Is Genesis 2:18 all that God says on the subject of marriage and singleness? Does Jesus, as a single man, help bring a fuller understanding to your singleness? Is it possible to be single and content? Even if you're NOT single, the topic is relevant to you, for we all KNOW singles. God calls us to walk with our single friends as they seek to honor Jesus with their singleness. Join us Sunday as we study 1 Corinthians 7 and discover how singles play a vital role in the Kingdom and local Church.

Getting behind God's vision for singleness,

Pastor TJ



Each has his own gift from God

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways should singleness be seen as a gift?
2. How should a proper understanding of God assigning our single or married state influence how we live?
3. Who are some heroes of the faith (both in the and outside the Bible) that were/are single and how did their singleness contribute to their ministry?
4. Share with the group a story about one of your spiritual children.
5. What are some effective ways to be a spiritual parent?
6. List out the various ways the New Testament uses family language. How can singles do a better job of fellowshiping with married couples? How can married couples do a better job of fellowshiping with singles?
7. What are some difficulties that come with singleness?
8. What dangers can the single and married alike get into when they are not content with Jesus? How do we grow contentment in Jesus?
9. Is contentment the same as not having strong desires for something that you don't have? Explain.



Each has his own gift from God

Discussion Questions

10. What are some ways people waste their singleness?
11. What are some ways people maximize their singleness?
12. How can singles balance working hard for the Kingdom and rest (aka avoiding burnout)?
13. How can Christians practice self-control in the area of sexuality when our current world inundates us with opportunities to express our sexuality in ungodly ways?
14. Do you know any singles that have faithfully lived out the picture of how the church loves Jesus?
15. What are the “worldly troubles” Paul references that married couples have?
16. Share with the group a couple that has modeled godly commitment to one another and God.
17. How would you define, “In the Lord?” AKA: What are the key things singles should be looking for in a spouse?
18. What compromises do singles often make for marriage and why?

Prayer & Praise



Each has his own gift from God

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Hot Seat

Just Snap Out of It?

1 KINGS 19:1-21

May 30

Just Snap Out of It?

One of my favorite characters in all of literature is CS Lewis' famous Marsh-wiggle, Puddleglum. As you can probably tell by his name, he is the type of person who sees the glass half empty rather than half full. Actually, it's perhaps too generous to say he sees the glass only HALF empty! In the words of the other characters, Puddleglum is a "wet blanket," gloomy and pessimistic.

If Puddleglum were a person in a doctor's office he would most likely be diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder or Clinical Depression. So it's a bit surprising, to us readers, not to God, that pessimistic Puddleglum becomes the protagonist in "The Silver Chair." I say not surprising to God because throughout the Bible and in Christian history, it is usually those who struggle most with depression who have done the most for the Kingdom.

This week we will look at the life of one such sufferer, Elijah, in hopes that we can better understand our own depression or that of a friend.

Seeking joy with you,

Pastor TJ



Arise and eat

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever experienced or walked with someone experiencing depression? What was most difficult? What was most helpful?
2. David Powlison writes, *The Bible never calls the experience of anguish, sorrow, despair, and confusion sinful, instead it gives voice to those experiences*. What passages are most helpful (gives voice) for those experiencing depression?
3. If someone recognizes they have signs of depression, what are some helpful next steps?
4. In what ways have you experienced spiritual warfare in the past month?
5. What are some common external circumstances that can bring on depression?
6. What should one do if the external factor of depression is a person?
7. How can our own sin bring on depression in our lives or the lives of those closest to us?
8. What are some common lies that you listen to rather than speak to?



Arise and eat

Discussion Questions

9. Take some time to remind one another of God's great love for us.
10. Can you give an example when diet, exercise, or rest helped alleviate depression?
11. As you survey your own diet, exercise, and rest, are there any areas that need to change?
12. What spiritual gifts do you have and how can you use them this week to serve the body?
13. Who is one person you will seek to encourage this week? How will you go about doing it?
14. What are some ways we can continue to meet with God even when we don't feel like it?
15. Have you ever had a "still small voice" experience with God?
16. How does Jesus' own suffering and grief speak into those experiencing depression?

Prayer & Praise



Arise and eat

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Hot Seat

Poor Jesus/Rich Jesus?

PHILIPPIANS
4:11-13

June 6

Poor Jesus/Rich Jesus?

In a series on hot topics it's inevitable that we eventually get to that most controversial of topics, particularly in the church...MONEY. While we might not like talking about it, few things in this life are better indicators as to where our heart is located. Whether we have a lot or a little, money is something we must think about and barter with EVERY day, be it cash in our pockets, plastic in our purses, WeChat wallet on our phones.

As you do routine health checks for your body or maintenance on your vehicle, it is necessary to do regular financial check-ups. This Sunday we will turn our attention to Philippians 4:13, that text that is most often ascribed to a gym wall or sides of basketball shoes. But more appropriately, we should be engraving this on our bank accounts...I can do ALL things through Christ who gives me strength. I can face plenty without forsaking God. I can face little without cursing God. I can do ALL things for Christ is my master, not my money.

Growing with you,

Pastor TJ



I am to be content

Discussion Questions

1. Give examples of wealthy Christians who are examples of how to steward your wealth well. What have you learned from them?
2. What are some ways you “enjoy” all that God provides without feeling guilty?
3. What are some ways we can use wealth in Beijing to bless others?
4. Give examples of poor Christians who are examples of how to trust in God? What have you learned from them?
5. Which has the greater temptation for you and why, riches or poverty?
6. What are the specific dangers that come with wealth?
7. What are the specific dangers that come with poverty?
8. What current opportunities are you able to give to and how do you choose between several good opportunities?



I am to be content

Discussion Questions

9. What is the fruit that comes from giving (Phil. 4:17)
10. What is the difference in our mindset of giving to people vs giving to the LORD as an act of worship?
11. Give testimony of God's faithfulness to supply all your needs as you gave faithfully, even when it was difficult.
12. What are some practical tips on how to avoid prideful giving that honors us rather than God?
13. Discuss how Jesus has modeled for us both poverty and riches.

Prayer & Praise



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Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Hot Seat

Born That Way?

1 CORINTHIANS
6:9-20

June 13

Born That Way?

One complaint against Christianity is that we are too narrow-minded and loveless, particularly when it comes to our stance on LGBTQ+. If God is a God of love (as we claim He is) then how can we put restraints on whom and how we are to love? After all, love is love is it not? Even in Christian circles today, many are reconsidering their stance on homosexuality. Some ignore it. Others work tirelessly to make the Old and New Testament more palpable. But no matter how much we might dislike the teaching, you can't deny the fact that the Bible addresses it in both the Old and New Testament. Nor can you say, as some claim, that Jesus never talked about it (read the Sermon on the Mount).

But this leads us to another question, is it really even worth discussing? Isn't this topic too controversial? Aren't we just setting ourselves up to look REALLY bad? If people's actions don't affect us, then why even bother having a voice in the conversation? With all that is wrong in the world, wouldn't our time be better spent tackling other "more important" matters?

The fact remains, God talks about it often. God seems to think it's quite important. God has called the church to be a pillar and buttress of truth (1 Timothy 3:15). One of the church's jobs is to accurately discern the current waves of culture and IN GRACE speak truth.

Seeking Truth with you,

Pastor TJ



You were bought with a price

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does the world speak with clarity on the LGBTQ+ issues?
2. What are some healthy and unhealthy ways you have seen the church handle these issues?
3. Have you ever heard of the revisionist view and if so what are some of their arguments? AKA, what are some common arguments people make for justifying homosexuality?
4. How can we as Christian be firm on our stance on homosexuality and yet at the same time loving toward those in that lifestyle?
5. Take some time to read the various vice lists in the New Testament (Matthew 15:19, Mark 7:21-22, Romans 1:29-31, Romans 13:13, 1 Corinthians 5:10-11, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatian 5:19-21, Ephesians 5:3-5, 1 Timothy 1:9-10, 2 Timothy 3:2-5, Revelation 21:8). Why do you suppose the “dark and horrible” sins are listed next to the “acceptable” sins?
6. What would you say to someone who wants to follow Jesus but refuses to give up their homosexual lifestyle?



You were bought with a price

Discussion Questions

7. In what ways can we help those in the LGBTQ+ community see the love of Jesus?
8. Why do you suppose the church is to respond differently to a person who claims to be a Christian and a non-Christian as they live out a homosexual lifestyle?
9. Why is identity so important to humanity and how does the Bible assign true identity to us?
10. When you became a Christian did you have any old sins that were hard to mortify (get rid of)? If so, how would you counsel someone who is currently experiencing this reality?
11. What are the three ways 1 Corinthians 6:11 identify believers? Which is most meaningful to you and why?
12. How do we learn to accept what God has called us even when we don't feel it or act it?
13. How does the Godhead work together to create identity for us? See 1 Corinthians 6:11.

Prayer & Praise



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Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Hot Seat

You Just Need More Faith?

JOB 1:1; 1:13-22

June 20

You Just Need More Faith?

One of the strongest objections to the existence of God is the fact that there is suffering in the world today. The thinking goes like this, “Either God is not all powerful and therefore suffering exists or God is not all good and therefore suffering exists. Either way, IF there is a god I’m not sure He’s worth following.”

Rather than ignore the question or simply ask people to have more faith, the Bible logically and compassionately addresses the problem of evil and suffering.

Join us this week as we discuss the God who speaks into your pain.

In Him,

Pastor TJ



Blessed be the name of the Lord

Discussion Questions

1. What is the most significant suffering you have ever experienced?
2. What is the hardest thing you are currently facing?
3. What are you afraid that you might have to go through someday?
4. What are some ways to comfort those who are suffering?
5. What are some common worldviews (causes and cures) on suffering and how does Christianity differ?
6. What is God doing with our suffering?
7. What are some helpful and unhelpful ways to express our loss?
8. Where is the line between voicing a complaint to God and cursing God?
9. What expressions of worship have been most meaningful to you in your suffering?
10. How is Jesus the true and better Job and how does that speak into our own suffering?



Prayer & Praise

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Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Hot Seat

Too Little Too Late?

2 TIMOTHY 1:1-14

June 27

Too Little Too Late?

The great commission is only effective to the point that each generation reaches the next. As this takes place, each generation will find it faces unique challenges other generations did not. First generation Christians are vastly different from second and third generation Christians.

Living in China, you meet many first generation Christians. You also meet many who are afraid to become first generation Christians. What will it mean for my family? What will it say about my ancestors who never had a chance to put their faith in Jesus? What does it mean for me during Chinese New Year or Qing Ming Jie?

We are not the first to ask these questions. Following the ascension, as the gospel was preached to Gentiles who became Christians who sought to raise children and grandchildren in the Lord, they too struggled with these generational issues.

Join us this Sunday as we see how the gospel transcends generational lines.

In Him,

Pastor TJ



Follow the pattern of the sound words

Discussion Questions

1. What are some common objections to the gospel?
2. 2 Timothy discusses several people who have forsaken the gospel. What are some common reasons why people forsake the gospel?
3. What does it mean to “repent and believe” the gospel?
4. What specific struggles do first generation Christians face?
5. What specific struggles do second and third generation Christians face?
6. What does it look like to “live out” the gospel?
7. Share of someone you know whose life has been radically transformed by the gospel.
8. How has the gospel transformed your life?



Follow the pattern of the sound words

Discussion Questions

9. What does it look like to fan into flames the Holy Spirit?
10. Read versus 12-14 and discuss the Spirit's role and our role in "guarding" the gospel in our lives.
11. Who has mentored you in the faith and how?
12. How can we all be more active in mentorship?
13. What tips and strategies can you share with parents on discipling their children?
14. Share with the group a time you shared the gospel.
15. How can we hold one another accountable to be faithful to share the gospel more regularly?

Prayer & Praise



Follow the pattern of the sound words

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