

Luther's Legacy for Laity
Disc 3: Dr. Darrell Jodock
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This study guide will follow the 8 parts of Dr. Jodock's DVD. The questions for discussion are taken from his presentations. Where appropriate, other references are listed at the end of a session.

Part 1: Luther's Basics

Summary:

Dr. Jodock talks about keeping God in the forefront of our lives and God's purpose for the world. Dr. Jodock thinks this creates a contextual structure as a framework for Luther's thoughts.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Does God change the world by God's self or does God change it through human beings?
2. Is order in the world important to God?
3. What is God's purpose for the world?
4. Does God micro-manage the world?
5. What is God's calling for us in the world?
6. God calls us to God's self. Does that mean we have to jump certain hurdles or pass appropriate tests to be accepted by God?

Part 2: Luther on Faith and Freedom

Summary:

Luther believed that we need to acknowledge what God has already done in our lives that we aren't even aware of. Dr. Jodock describes this as our becoming co-workers with God.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How can we exercise our freedom without judging or hurting others?
2. According to Luther, can we recognize that our relationship needs repairing?
3. In Christian freedom, are we able to do as we please?
4. What about love for our neighbors? Is self control expressed when we act?
5. When we meet our neighbors, what role does our belief in God play in that occasion?
6. In the description, Dr. Jodock suggests that it is easier to do what is wrong than what is right. How does God work through us so that we do not harm our neighbor?
7. Is our purpose to serve the neighbor or ourselves or both?

Part 3: How is God Active in the World?

Summary:

God is present in what happens in the world. God does not have a blueprint as such, but works through the people in the world working for the purposes of the world. God does not always work on the side of those who think they are on God's side.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How does the power that God gives us serve God's purpose? How does it serve our purpose?
2. In the third example, God gives us the power to manage things and take part in life in general. Does that give us the ability to always make the right decision?
3. Is everything that we have in our lives a gift from God or are we entitled?
4. Does our life clearly show our gratitude to God for all of these gifts?

Part 4: Vocation

Summary:

We are called to be channels of God's good gifts to others, by serving the neighbor and community, We stay in touch with God through Bible study and prayer. Prayer that listens more than acts.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Does every human being have a calling in the world? (vocation)
2. Is it human nature to listen more to the world around us than to give our ideas of how things should be?
3. Did Luther believe in a monastic society?
4. Is vocation, or calling, the same as our occupation? (work)
5. Is someone benefiting from our vocation that we bring to the world? Explain how your vocation helps others or community.
6. How important is it for us as Christians to live a Christ centered life?

Reference:

Jack Fortin's book: *Centered Life*, Augsburg Fortress publishers.

Part 5: Wisdom to Serve our Neighbor

Summary:

Luther gave wisdom a wide role in people's lives. People need to use their wisdom to shape government. Education doesn't guarantee good wisdom or good government. The lines blur between what is secular and religious. We need to be cautious about what we claim to know about God, and what we know about other human beings.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Does God's plan for us, give us all the answers we need to know how to live?
2. Based on your own past experiences, do we always come up with the right answers?
3. God has set us apart to serve others. Do we model our lives to pattern the example of the life of Jesus?
4. Is the concept of wisdom limitless?

Reference: Proverbs and Ecclesiastes

Part 6: Luther's Incarnational Concept of God

Summary:

Since we generally want to fix things we have difficulty relying on God's presence. Dr. Jodock believes that we must start with doctrine of Incarnation. Luther believed that the primary purpose of the Bible was to reveal Christ. Luther emphasized the diversity of the different authors of scripture.

Questions for Discussion

1. Is it enough, when someone is in distress or death is imminent, to simply be present?
2. Is God just as present when we are not in distress or need?
3. Is it important that we try to explain the mystery of the incarnation?
4. In Luther's view, are the bread and wine changed in the institution of Holy Communion?
5. Paul's letters, the Psalm's and the Gospel of John were most important to Luther. Do you feel that some biblical authors have more impact on you than others?
6. Is there more than one meaning to a particular part of scripture?

Part 7: Christianity and other Religions

Summary:

Dr. Jodock noted that Luther did not deal directly with this issue, but he did have a lot to say about the relationship of the Christian with the world. His view was that God can work through other people, too! However, only God can repair our broken relationships with God.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Did Luther have to deal with other religions in the Europe of his day?
2. According to Luther, are there areas of life where we do not have free will?
3. There is a limit to our knowledge of other people's relationship to God. Does that justify our judging that relationship?
4. Is Christianity the only valid religion in the world today?
5. Is America a Christian country today?

Part 8: Christian and Jews

Biblical References:

Romans 9-11

Summary:

Luther works with the idea of supercessionism; in other words, Christianity took the place of Judaism. Paul is very clear that Judaism has not been abandoned by God.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Does supercessionism mean that God no longer loves the Jewish Community, or that they are longer the chosen people?
2. In the covenant that God has made with us do we work as individuals or do we work with the whole community?
3. Is the use of the law always negative? Can commands be positive?
4. Does dialoging with people of other faiths threaten our beliefs as Christians?