

THE ARTISAN SOUL

CREATING YOUR LIFE INTO A WORK OF ART

Session 6: Canvas – Embracing Our Limits

March 15-21, 2020

Every creative endeavor becomes a realization of both how limited and how unlimited we are...Every medium carries within itself inherent limitations, and every artist comes with limitations. True creativity is not the outflow of a world without boundaries. The creative act is the genius of unleashing untapped potential and unseen beauty within the constraints and boundaries of the medium from which we choose to create.

~Erwin McManus, *The Artisan Soul* pp. 145-146

Hang Out (30 Minutes)

Ice Breaker: Use The Complete Book of Questions. Have a group member pick a number between 401-500, look up the question for that number and encourage everyone to answer. Remember, everyone has the right to pass on any question if they aren't ready to answer.

Watch the Video (24 Minutes)

Watch the video if necessary. If everyone viewed the sermon before the meeting, add this time to your discussion.

Discuss (30 Minutes)

It's okay if you don't get to every question. Leaders, guide the group to the questions you think will be most helpful. In order to do the prayer as described below, please answer #1.

1. What is a rule, limitation, or boundary with which you have struggled? What is one that you have appreciated?
2. Help everyone look up and then have someone read Philippians 2:5-11. This passage has been called "The Christ Hymn" or "The Philippian Hymn" because some Biblical scholars think that these are the words to an early Christian hymn that the Apostle Paul included in his letter to the Philippians. This hymn describes Jesus and what Jesus experienced, and follows a similar trajectory to the Second Article of The Apostles' Creed as shown on the sheet.
 - What does Philippians 2:5-11 teach you about Jesus?
 - In verse 7, the Greek verb translated in the NIV as he "made himself nothing" literally means he "emptied himself" or "stripped himself". How do you understand that Jesus *emptied himself of being in the very nature God?* (v.6)
 - Brainstorm some of the limitations Jesus experienced as God becoming a limited human being and discuss what that experience would have been like for Jesus.
 - One way to understand what Philippians 2:5-11 teaches is that God limited himself. Why do you think God chose to limit himself into a human being in order to accomplish our salvation?

3. Help everyone look up and then have someone read Exodus 20:1-17.

- As you read the Ten Commandments this time what caught your attention or raised a question for you?
- Read and discuss this quote. *The Ten Commandments provide a perfect example of why boundaries are essential for freedom and creativity to find their greatest expression. When we are committed to not stealing, we have to commit ourselves to creating. Often that is code word for work. When we resolve to never lie again, the commitment to telling the truth drives us to live a life that is trustworthy. When we make a commitment to never kill, we have to deal with our anger issues and learn the power of forgiveness. The Ten Commandments now only do not restrict human freedom; they protect human freedom. ~Erwin McManus, The Artisan Soul pp. 157-158*
- Take a minute on each commandment to answer this question: When a person keeps this commandment, what becomes possible?
- If you want a group challenge, memorize the Ten Commandments as a group. Using the sheet listing the Ten Commandments, go around the circle and have each person recite from memory one of commandments. The first few times around help each other out and use the sheet when necessary. A different person starts with the First Commandment each time. See how many times it takes for you to go around before you do it without mistakes.

4. Think of these three dimensions of your life: accomplishments, relationships, and your well-being. Which of these dimensions would improve if you were to live more by God's commands? You are free to explain further, but only if you wish.

Bonus material

Watch and discuss "Beauty and Violence" by Erwin McManus that is related to chapter 6 in The Artisan Soul. Leaders, the link for this video is in the email you received.

Possible Next Steps:

~Taken and modified from The Artisan Soul, pages 197-198 by Erwin McManus

- Check your "canvas": How does the outer world of your accomplishments look? How are your relationships? How does your inner world look?
- Check the work of our art that is your life: Are you known by love? Are you a voice of hope? Are you living by faith?
- Check your materials: Take a positive attitude toward life. Have sincere motives toward others, explaining their actions in the kindest way. Have the courage to risk and fail. Embrace the future as an adventure. Celebrate mystery. Remember that people matter most. Make life an act of worship.
- Embrace limits: Eliminate what makes you less than what God created you to be. Entrust yourself to God. Work within the limitations and boundaries of your life and God's values to create a timeless work of art out of your life. Keep integrity bounded and your imagination boundless. Live a principled life so that you may be most free to create a beautiful life.

Pray (5 Minutes)

Bridging off of #1 above, thank God for a rule, limitation, or boundary that you have appreciated for the benefit(s) that it has given you.

You are welcome to use this prayer to structure what you pray:

"Gracious Lord, thank you for (name the rule, limitation, or boundary that you appreciate.) This is has helped me to (describe the benefit that you have experienced from living by the rule, limitation, or boundary.) Thank you for your commandments. Amen."