
CROOKED STICKS AND STRAIGHT LINES

ANOTHER WEIRD STORY:

Judges 11:1-12:7

A FEW POINTS TO PONDER:

- Don't confuse being _____, with being

_____.

_____ doesn't equal spirituality.

_____ doesn't mean I'm right with God.

- God doesn't always _____.

- A real team player cheers _____.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR US:

- ▶ Our primary purpose is to _____.

- ▶ Hiding your _____ means limiting your _____.

Home Fellowship Questions

1. This week's message made it clear that "God can draw straight lines with crooked sticks." Can you think of a time when you felt like God was using you despite your weaknesses, fears or limitations? It could be something really big and significant or something smaller and unnoticed.
2. Put yourself in this scenario: You have a friend who has recently stepped over the line and given Jesus the steering wheel of his life. He's really excited about an opportunity to share his testimony with others and wants to make "God look good." He asks you about the rough spots in his past and a few of the "skeletons in his closet." What could be some guidelines to give him on sharing or hiding the details of his past?
3. Chris pointed out that our primary purpose and reason for being here is to make God look good. This might sound to some like God has a reputation problem and needs our help to look good in the eyes of His creation. How can the following verses help us understand that God doesn't need us to manage His image?

Colossians 1:16

Romans 9:20-21

Psalms 19:1-4

Job 38:1-7

What rationale and encouragement can you find in these passages and **Matthew 5:14-16** to spend your life making God look good?

4. This week's message showed us that we can't judge our closeness with God by simply looking at how successful we are in life. However, the Bible does give us some key indicators. According to **John 15:1-5** and **1 John 2:3-6, 9** what are some telltale signs that we really are "right with God" and walking with Him?

Colossians 3:12-14 and **Matthew 5:43-47** help us zoom in and see some specific actions and attitudes that are further evidence of our relationship with God. Which of the things listed in these passages are most important for you to implement? Which are most challenging?

5. It's easy for us to look at the people from Ephraim who were "complaining from the bench" and criticize them for being all about the credit and fame. Paul had many reasons for being all about those same things in his ministry and yet his attitude was much different. What does Paul's writing in **Philippians 3:4-11** tell us about his true priorities?

What does **Philippians 2:5-8** show you about the source of Paul's attitude?

As you think about God using "crooked" or even ordinary "sticks" to do His work, check out what the religious leaders of the day said about a couple of Jesus' followers: "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus." – Acts 4:13.

Are you in a place where you could use some more time with Jesus in your life?

Are there any other action steps from this week's message or homework that you would like to apply to your life?