

No 11
November 10th 2012

TRAINING

FOR GUYS



Remember, remember the 5th of November

OK, so we're a little late here. But I wanted to go on record as saying I don't much like the word 'guy'. I got really irritated (not enough to say anything) when I was in a restaurant recently and the waitress kept saying things like "you guys ok?". What's wrong with sir and madam these days I thought. Ok, old and crotchety I know.

So why call this group Training for Guys then? Well... I had a website called tfgministries.org.uk and wasn't using it, so rather than buy a new one....

End of rant, sorry. Calling people guy harks right back to 5/11 (in the year 1605). As we all know, the plotters were caught. For some reason one of them became more infamous than the others (who's heard of Robert Catesby these days?). Guy Fawkes (or Guido as he changed his name to to sound more european and Catholic) became the fall "guy". When the Government passed a law that 5th November would be celebrated as a National Thanksgiving Day each year, it was Mr Fawkes' effigy that began to be burnt. The Guy on the fires was scruffy and represented a bad man, so the word guy began to be used as an insult for scruffy or bad men.

Over in America, where they also celebrated this up until 1776 but then made it King George III on the fire (but still called him Guy), they eventually started to talk about 'good guys' too. So that meant that 'guy' just came to mean a feller. By the mid20th century in the States they started referring to women as guys too.

So, this summer, in a restaurant, a waitress said to my group: "are you guys ok?" I blame Robert Catesby and his gang.

Our Father, I dunno what this is all about, but....

....on earth as in heaven

This phrase, which relates to both Your will be done and Your Kingdom come expresses the amount to which we are praying these things. We are not satisfied just with partial answers...we want God's will done on earth in the same way, to the same quality as, with the same passion as it is done in heaven. We want God's Kingdom to be as evident here with the same clarity as it is evident in heaven. We aren't up for second measures.

When Esau sold his birthright to Jacob, and later realised that meant he would not get Isaac's first blessing, he passionately cried out "Give me the blessing also!". He could not have it, he could only have a second best blessing. But Jesus is teaching us that we can participate in the fulness of God's blessing here on earth, as it is in heaven.

It's also the part of the prayer where we remember that God gave Man dominion on earth over all life (see Genesis 2). It is only when Man calls out to God that God can act... for God gave Man rule of the earth. This was usurped by Satan and could only be redeemed by God becoming flesh to defeat Satan. *But He redeemed it for it to be Man's again.* God will not act on earth without our say-so.

Where do you have authority? What are the areas of earth that you have invested yourself in? Not just where you live, but things that interest you and people/places you care about. Those are the realms you can pray "Father, here as in heaven, Your will be done". None of us on our own can stand watch over the whole earth, but each of us has a portion to watch over. Don't be too easily distracted from your patch, and don't be overwhelmed by the rest of the world. Be focused in prayer!

This is a question that theologians have argued over for centuries, and there certainly isn't space here to do it justice.

It's a question lots of people ask, but I will say that it is a question from the wrong perspective. Let me ask another question or two.

Does God send people to Hell, or is that where they are heading by themselves? Isn't God more in the business of rescuing them from hell?

Jesus came that we 'might have life in all its fulness' (John 10:10) and tells us that His Father is not willing for any child to perish (Matthew 18:14). You know John 3:16, that also teaches us about God's heart. The Bible is consistent and clear that God's intention is to save people and rescue them from an eternity without Him. The Father and the Son are both called Saviour (eg Psalm 18:46, Luke 1:47 and Acts 13:23) - but it uses the name as a title for the Father more than it does for Jesus!

But then some will say the only reason people were heading for hell in the first place was because God decreed it. Back in Genesis 2:17 we read God telling man that death would come to him if he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If God hadn't have said that, then we would not be heading for hell and needing a saviour.

A new Archbishop of Canterbury... so what? Does it matter? Dr Justin Welby certainly needs our prayers. What he says will be reported more than any other Christian in our country. He won't get it all right. We need to pray for Him even when we think he has said things wrong. He's a competent man, but he hasn't been a Christian all his life. He became a Christian through an Alpha Course at HTB (Holy Trinity Church in Brompton, London). Some of what he believes is undoubtedly still based on the worldly viewpoint he had before being saved. He's a mix of new life and old assumptions...just like most of us. The sad thing is he will be 'gunned' at more by Christian than others (liberals for his views that Gay marriage is wrong, conservatives for supporting women bishops). Whether or not you are an anglican, will you pray for him as a brother or condemn him when he says things you don't like?



How can a loving God send people to Hell?

But even that was God *warning* man what would happen. He wasn't telling him to do it, nor (as some suggest) was it blackmail. If you see someone playing near a fire you say "Be careful, you will get burnt". If they step back, great. But if not and they fall in *it wasn't you that sent them into it*.

God has done everything He can to firstly stop people from going to Hell ... a right relationship with Him in the first place would have prevented sin ever occurring. Then, when we started heading that way He provided a Saviour, provided healing for the effects of sin, and calls us away from Hell.

Hell is devastating, and it wounds the heart of the Father to see people still heading there. He's certainly not sending them!

Bible Study

this week: Colossians 4:2 - 6

It takes up the theme of prayer which we were talking about in these pages last week.

You'll find it at

www.tfgministries.org.uk/podcasts

All back issues of these sheets are there too.

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