**VBS is a wrap and SGM planning has now moved to the top of the list as August is now upon us and September will be right on its heels with the beginnings of new studies and focuses. But what will those be?**

**Whereas we typically begin the fall season with one study for all groups to focus on together, I’m feeling compelled to offer some topics of consideration for the groups to lean into. In light of Pastor Richard’s recent sermon series on the Book of James, the debate regarding cessation of spiritual gifts, as well as the challenges we are facing within the culture, there are many things to consider. Here are just a few:**

* **Healing….what does that look like today?**
* **Prayer….is there a more effective way to pray?**
* **Spiritual Gifts…what are they…how do they work…do they still work?**
* **Homosexuality and Transgenderism…how in the world does the Church navigate those topics??**
* **What are we to learn from the OT examples as outlined in 1 Corinthians 10?**

**Since these have been topics that I’ve been seeking deeper understanding on for a number of years, I figured it might be the same for some of you. Scripture gives us guidance as to how to navigate these tough questions. The following are some passages that have helped to guide me in my studies:**

**Isaiah 28:9-10 *“To whom will he teach knowledge; and to whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast? For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.”***

**Daniel 2:20-22 *“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons, he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.”***

**John 5:39 *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me that you may have life.***

**John 16:13-14 *When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on His own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.***

**Acts 17:11 *Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.***

**1 Thes 5:16-22 *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.***

**An important question for each of us to ponder is “Why do I believe what I believe?”. Is it because you were taught it, assumed it, inherited it, read about it or is it because you sought out the answer from the Word of God with the guidance of the Holy Spirit? Let us search the Scriptures together on these topics and lean into the Helper as He guides us along.**

**More information will follow as I consult with the small group leaders and their plans for the fall. If you are curious about small groups, please feel free to contact me per the information below.**

**Striving to Grow in Grace and Knowledge,**

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