

## Questions for Devotional Responses (second set)

In addition to the first set. More to follow.

- Students will write four papers aimed at bringing about personal reflection and spiritual formation. Students have the option to choose to interact with any select four related to the following readings, with no more than two from one single author.
- DR due 2/7, 2/14, **3/6, 3/20**
- Format for responses: typed, two pages (part of a third page is acceptable), double-spaced, 1" margins, Times New Roman font, size 11. (Must follow these formatting directions.)
- **Optional Devotional Response #5** – answer the following question:
  - *Understanding that God uses everything in our lives for our benefit (His good, our sanctification), briefly write about one experience that you would not want to endure again, but was so valuable for the forming of your character that you are now thankful for it.* (This can be an event, a relationship/person, or any other experience).
  - Up to two pages, typed 1-½ spaced. Due 3/20 with Exam 3.

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### Mark L. Strauss, "John: The Gospel of the Son Who Reveals the Father" (I)

- Consider three of the following questions in your response.
  - a. Consider Figure 10.6 (page 310) on Dualism in John's Gospel. Take two of the contrasts (e.g., Believe on the Son, versus Reject the Son) and write about the impact of the two different statements on your mind and heart. What jumps out as you sit and think on these truths?

### John Piper, "Demand #1: Your Must Be Born Again" (J)

- Consider each of the following questions in your response.
  - a. Why should Nicodemus have known what Jesus was talking about when he told him of the need to be born again?
  - b. What does it mean, according to Piper, to be born of water and the Spirit?
  - c. What does it mean to be spiritually dead, and how does this affect one's ability to see the kingdom of God? Who is spiritually dead?
  - d. How can someone obey the command to be born again when rebirth is the work of the Spirit who "blows where it will" (p. 39)? Also, note how is this connected to the quote from St. Augustine that appears in the introduction: "Command what you wish, but give what you command" (p. 26)? (Or, as your teacher often states, *God's commands are His enablements.*) Should all the commands Jesus gives be viewed in the same way?
  - e. Have you obeyed this command? How do you know?

### **John Piper, "Demand #7: Abide in Me" (J)**

- Consider each of the following questions in your response.
- a. Do you, or did you, think of obedience to any of other demands Jesus gives (such as believe, repent, come to Him, listen to His word, etc.) as *one-time events*? Why or why not? How does the command to abide in Jesus show that obedience to Jesus demands is a lifetime affair?
  - b. What is the main point in the analogy of the vine in John 15? What does "abiding" in Jesus mean?
  - c. Why is abiding in Jesus not the same thing as bearing fruit or keeping Jesus' commandments? (Explain John 15:10.)
  - d. What does it mean to abide in Jesus' love or abide in Jesus' word? How has Jesus shown us that we will not abide in Him apart from His keeping hand?
  - e. How is it that "we are not idle in the battle to abide in Jesus" (p. 67)? How do we actively and responsibly abide in Jesus in such a way that his keeping hand remains ultimately responsible? Are you aiming and striving to abide in this way? Explain.

### **John Piper, "Demand #9: Love God With All Your Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength" (J)**

- Consider each of the following questions in your response.
- a. What is meant by the sentence, "God would not be honored by groundless love" (p. 76)? What does this imply that we must do if we are to love God?
  - b. How is Jesus the litmus test for our love for God? Why can Jesus be this litmus test?
  - c. Why does Piper say we must see and savor God as "compellingly beautiful" (p. 77)? Why should we think that love for God most essentially *involves the affections, not behavior*?
  - d. How can we balance Psalm 73:25, "There is nothing on earth that I desire besides [God]," with the need to love other people?
  - e. Are you loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? Can anyone? What implications does this have for our relationship with God? Where do your faculties and capacities fall short of treasuring God above all things? Pray over these things, asking for forgiveness and new affections to love God more. (We can be open and honest about our shortcomings, as C.S. Lewis once wrote related to prayer, "Lay before Him what is in us, not what ought to be in us.")

More to follow.