

**LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS**  
**for the Week of February 26, 2017**

**BEAUTIFUL ORTHODOXY:**  
*Wisdom for the Way Forward*  
**Proverbs 3:1-8**

1. Take some time in your Life Group to analyze and discuss the following excerpt.

Harold Smith, the president and CEO of *Christianity Today* writes:

“... we live in an angry, at times ugly, increasingly more confused world. The tone of our rhetoric – across all media and even behind some closed church doors – is more rage than redemption. Is more disgrace than grace. You’ve seen it! You’ve heard it yourselves! On websites where attacking individuals and movements is second nature; and on Twitter, where shameless epithets leave helpless targets shamed and scarred for life. Even *Time* magazine felt compelled to feature this downward-digital-spiral in its August 29, 2016, cover story, ‘Why We’re Losing the Internet to a Culture of Hate.’ A season of disrespect defines our so-called enlightened age. And making matters eternally worse, the truth of our convictions – the truth of God’s Truth seems increasingly worn down by attractive heresies and ugly orthodoxies that in the end are destined to leave more and more of God’s creation in despair and without a sense of hope. Fewer people, including those raised in the church, consider biblical Christianity as a viable worldview that can help individuals and cultures flourish. This is darkness . . .”

Would you agree that anger and frustration are everywhere these days, and seem to be growing? Are we truly living in a “season of disrespect”? What’s driving it in your opinion? How have you been personally impacted by it?

What do you think Harold Smith means by the “*attractive heresies*” and “*ugly orthodoxies*” that he claims make matters even worse? How so? Examples?

2. **Read Proverbs 3:1-8.** Then read it again in **The New Living Translation**, or in **The Message**. As we enter the Lenten season this year, beginning March 1, Ash Wednesday, our entire church family will be reading through the Book of Proverbs together – one chapter a day for all thirty-one days of March. Proverbs is a prime example of the inspired wisdom literature found in God’s Word. How would you define “wisdom”? What’s the difference between wisdom and mere knowledge or information?

**WISDOM =** \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are some specifics we learn about true wisdom in Proverbs 3:1-8?
  
4. What's the difference between being "wise in your own eyes" (Prov. 3:7; Isa. 5:20-21) and "leaning not on your own understanding" (Prov. 3:5)? How can we tell the difference between the two? How do we know we're doing one in contrast to the other?
  
5. This year as we journey towards Easter, we are focusing on living out our faith as examples of "Beautiful Orthodoxy." This is true wisdom. What does "orthodoxy" mean? And why should it be seen as beautiful when applied to our Christian faith (Matt 5:16; Rom. 12:9-21; Phil. 4:8-9; Col. 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:15)?
  
6. "Through surrender and practice, Jesus expected his apprentices to become like him (Luke 6:40). In fact, the earliest disciples of Jesus consistently identified themselves as 'followers of THE WAY' (Acts 24:14), suggesting that they viewed apprenticeship to Jesus as a way of life, the combination of right belief and right living – or what we might call *orthopraxy*." (Mark Scandrette, *Practicing the Way of Jesus: Life Together in the Kingdom of Love*)

Define the meaning of the following three words. How do they - *together* - form three movements of a healthy, growing spiritual life that reflect the Way of Jesus?

- (1) **ORTHODOXY** =
- (2) **ORTHOPATHY** =
- (3) **ORTHOPRAXY** =

7. Our calling as disciples of Jesus is to point people to the unimaginable beauty of the gospel ... but sadly, instead of beautiful orthodoxy, often what people see when they look at Christians and the church is ugly dogmatism, arrogant self-righteousness, and angry judgmentalism. Mark Galli writes: "In the end, though, the good, the true, and the beautiful are not about us and how well we exemplify them, but about the One who calls himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Consequently, beautiful orthodoxy is not so much a cause or a set of behaviors as it is a spotlight on the One who is goodness, truth, and beauty" (cf. Jn 16:13-14). What would happen if all Christians – before we spoke, or took any action – would ask: "Can what I'm about to say or do, pass this three-fold test in the Spirit of Jesus: Is it **GOOD**? Is it **TRUE**? Is it **BEAUTIFUL**?" Prayerfully practice this Lenten discipline this week, and at our next meeting let's share what we learned, and how it impacted our daily lives and our every day routines.