

Gamma 11

Study 5

Ephesians 2:1-4

Section A (Exegetical Questions)

- 1. What does Paul mean by spiritual death how are we spiritually dead?**
- 2. How is following the ways of the world reflective our spiritual death in verse 2-3**
- 3. Many philosophers like Jean Jacque Rousseau maintain that man was basically born and it is society that influences them and makes them bad. Does that make sense? What is Paul's opinion on that?**
- 4. This part of the verse "the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind," best summarises our spiritual condition. What is the "flesh" in Paul's understanding ? (Genesis 3:4-5 and Romans 8:5-8)**

Section B

Reflection Questions

- 1. How can a person be active in church and morally upright and righteous be still spiritually dead?**
- 2. There are many people who in church spend much of their time criticising and gossiping about others in their moral failings. This tends to happen in churches more so than even the work place why do you think that is so?**

Section C

Case history

A young Christian youth leader Jessie Golem accepted a fully paid invitation from a friend to visit him in Vancouver she stayed at his place and was sexually assaulted. Since then she has left the faith and this is what she writes

My dissolution of my relationship with God was not because of the negative interactions I experienced with Christians, but that I genuinely feel as though a relationship has been broken. From that moment in the darkness in Vancouver, where I couldn't answer the question to "Where was God?" I continued to feel betrayed, and come up with questions I couldn't answer. I couldn't understand what kind of god would create people, and in one breath, tell them they are perfect, that he "knew them while they were in their mother's womb" but then tell them they are inherently disordered, or can't be leaders because of their gender or race, or creates people who are inherently sinful?

I believe we weren't given a "choice" to follow god based on the eating an apple in the Garden of Eden, because now our "eternal life" is wholly dependent on us loving God. There's no choice. How can that be true love? "Love God, or go to hell"? How cruel is that? It doesn't matter to me whether God exists or not -- it more matters as to why he didn't do anything when I needed him, and remains not present in so many instances of suffering around the world, historically and presently.

I no longer want to feel like I'm incapable, or inherently flawed, or unable to do things without God. It feels more empowering, great, and wonderful to believe in myself, and know I can do things because I can. And that I'm not a product of sin, but a human being with wishes, hopes and dreams. I have infinite possibilities, not because a god allows it to be so, but because humanity has been, for thousands of years, in the midst of evil, war, and greed, working to also create goodness, and build a better world, and I can continue on that fight for a better world, not for the motivation of heaven at the end of my life, but the assurance that my children and children's children can continue to build, innovate, and create in a better and more beautiful world than I can imagine. And that, to me, is enough

1. What is the main issue that lead her to renounce her faith? How can we address that issue in her life?

- 2. There are whole host of other issues Jessie now brings up about the Christian faith which is troubling to her but are legitimate concerns that we as rational believing people should address. What are they and how can we address them or should we too close our eyes?**

- 3. Do you realise that some of her doubts are the same doubts many Christians secretly harbour in the back of their minds but are not honest enough to bring them up for discussion. This leaves them in danger of one day having a crisis and these issues will contribute to their loss of faith as they have never been addressed. Do you have any issues like this to discuss?**