



Men's Golf Fellowship

Speaker Discussion Questions

Mark Whitacre (Part 2)

Spiritual Topics: Marriage, Stress, Reputation, Looking back on your life

About the Talk

This is a continuation of Mark's talk regarding his time as an undercover FBI agent at ADM in the 1990's. Through that experience and his subsequent imprisonment, Mark's life and marriage were under considerable pressure and his reputation as a high profile executive was ruined. Mark says that if it were not for his relationship with God, he would never have survived. We will again use Mark's experiences as a platform for our discussion as we think about how they apply to our lives.

Discussion Questions

- Mark was very explicit that it was not his conscience that drove him to turn himself in, but that it was the urging and insistence of his wife, Ginger. Who are the two or three people who have played a role in giving you direction over your lifetime? More specifically, what role has your wife played in guiding you in your career or spiritual life? Would you say that you listen to your wife's counsel more times than not? Please share a time when your wife challenged a particular area of your life that you did not want challenged (i.e. refuse a promotion, refuse a physical move, apologize to someone, etc.). Did you listen? Have you ever not listened to your wife and regretted it? **Related Scripture: Genesis 2:18-24 – A Wife's Role**
- Mark described a time when he broke down under the tremendous stress from being an undercover agent. He found himself outside in the rain one night at 3:30 a.m., wearing a 3-piece suit and blowing leaves off his driveway. He admitted that during his time undercover, he could not sleep at night. What are some things that create stress or pressure in life (i.e. job, marriage, finances, retirement plans, etc.)? As a group, develop a list of ways that people cope with stress and pressure, both in healthy and not so healthy ways? How do/did you typically handle stress and pressure in a healthy way? Have you ever had anything good result from the pressures in your life? How has it changed you? **Related Scripture: Matthew 11:28 – Coping with Stress**

- Mark's talk is remarkable on many levels, but what is especially noteworthy is the transparent way he describes himself. He talks about his tremendous greed, his pettiness, and the importance he placed on his position of power and even his blatant stupidity in a very open manner. Why do you think he is able to describe his failings so openly? If you had to describe your shortcomings to a group of peers, how easy or difficult would it be? What is one area of your reputation that you are proud of? How important is your reputation to you? How important should it be? ***Related Scripture: Proverbs 22:1 – Reputation***
- Mark tape-recorded his colleagues for over three years for the federal government without his peers knowing it. Because of those tapes, the FBI was able to convict all 4 of the top ADM executives. I'm sure that after they were convicted, looking back they regretted what they had done. Looking back on your life, are there one or two things that you regret? The ADM executives did not know they were being taped. Do you think that they would have acted differently and made different choices if they had known they were being taped? What is it about that knowledge that you think would change their decisions? What would be your reaction right now if you found out that your whole career had been taped? What about your entire life? ***Related Scripture: Luke 12:2-3 – Your Life on Tape***

Closing Prayer

Lord, help me to approach the difficulties in my life with an eternal perspective. Give me eyes to see your purposes in them to shape and change me and to loosen my grip on the things of this life. Help me to understand the wisdom in the fact that you are not as concerned with my happiness as my holiness. Amen.