

Introduction:

1. When have you bought (or been given) something, only to later throw it away without ever having used it?
2. When was the last time that something unexpected overturned your plans for the day? How did you react?

Understanding:

3. Compare John 12:24 and James 1:17-18. In the light of "much fruit" in John, what is the importance of James talking about firstfruits?
4. In Acts 17:6(ESV) the opponents of the first Christians say they have "turned the world upside down". How can that be true for us today?
5. Does hating your life in this world mean that it's wrong to have fun and enjoy life? Support your answer biblically.

We instinctively base our sense of self on things we can gain in this world: career, home, marriage, etc. For the next 2 questions read Mark 8:34-37 where Jesus talks about saving and losing your life.

6. What happens if you base your life only on these things and you lose them?
7. What happens if you base your life only on these things and do NOT lose them?
8. How does Jesus' idea of identity in today's passage compare to what the current culture calls "self-esteem"?
9. Read Romans 12:1-2. Basically it is a way of dying unto yourself. Read the verses carefully. How much of this depends on us? How much depends on God?
10. In John 12:26 Jesus says "Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be". How can you discern when you should stick to what you have planned, and when it is wise to give up what is in your Outlook calendar?
11. When you say "Yes" to doing something hard and troubling and intimidating, does it mean that God will like you more? Why or why not?

Application:

12. ISIS executed 21 for following Christ. In many areas in Africa and the Middle East being a Christian is life-threatening. Pray for the families of those executed and for all the persecuted Christians around the world.
13. This application is copied from the Chapel's "LENTEN GUIDE":
READ: John 12:20-28
REFLECT: Where is God calling you to give up control in your own life? Why is this necessary?
FAST: Ask someone close to you to set your fasting goal this week. Resist the desire to be in control.