

Image in a Funk

WEEK ONE LEADER'S GUIDE

Big Idea

Things are not as they are supposed to be.

Format Overview (1 hour)

- I. **INTRO** // Provide some direction
- II. **ARTICLE** // Read Greek Things
- III. **DIALOGUE** // Discuss concepts together
- IV. **WRAP-UP** // Transition to next week

INTRO: *We are going to be spending four weeks talking about the similarities between God's story and the Greek story. There are many parallels within our Greek culture that can help us understand spiritual realities. The Greek Things article is split up into four parts. We will read the first part today. The goal of Greek Things is to take you on a reflective journey to help you make sense of God and Greek Life. Here we go.*

ARTICLE (10 minutes)

Read the article together: Hand out copies to everyone and read it out loud together (taking turns at paragraph breaks). Tell your group to make notes or underline certain sentences that stick out to them that can be brought up during the discussion.

DIALOGUE (45 minutes)

Things In a Funk

1. What are some evidences in your Greek system of things not being what they are supposed to be? Share some specific examples or stories.
2. What are some evidences in your own life of things not being what they are supposed to be?

God Image, Greek Image

3. Summarize what the phrase "being made in the image of God" means.
4. What is one thing that brings you alive? How might this give you a clue as to what God is like?
5. Discuss the similarities between the goals of God's image and the goals of the Greek image. Hint: Look at Part 2 of the article.



GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 1

A Tarnished Image

6. How did the article help you to understand sin better? How would you describe “sin” to a friend?
7. How has sin derailed the spread of God’s image? How has sin derailed the original Greek image?

WRAP-UP: *Thank you for sharing. We’ve learned that there is a serious problem with both God’s image and the Greek image. Next week we are going to dive into a discussion about what God plans to do about this problem. Stay tuned. Before we take off, are there any last thoughts or questions burning in your head about today’s article or topic?*



Greek Things

PART 1 OF 10 THINGS IN A FUNK

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that things aren't as they are supposed to be.

Things meaning the world. Things meaning you.

In your fraternity or sorority you may find issues like hazing or alcoholism or rape. Or, if you aren't "one of those chapters" you may still find issues like gossip, slander, verbal abuse of new members, a disrespect of exec members in your House, and so on.

You may also find, within your own life, any of the following: sex, drugs, pornography, masturbation, cutting, insecurity, rebellion, parallelism (comparison to others), arrogance, judging, cheating, lying, stealing, infidelity, disrespect of your parents, self disapproval, dissatisfaction with life, lack of purpose, etc.

Like me, you may have noticed that the atmosphere during a party is not the same type of atmosphere that you'll find in the morning, when girls are leaving, regret is in the air, and large amounts of Advil are being taken.

I would often hear stories of guys who lived right across the hall from me in the House who would cheat on their girlfriends. These brothers would say that since they weren't actually having sex with these neighbor girls, that it really wasn't cheating.

I used to get woken up in the middle of the night because I would hear my fraternity brother and his live-in girlfriend yelling at each other. Sometimes phones and other such appliances would be thrown down the hall during one of these fights. They would love each other one day and then hate each other the next. You may have been in or observed a relationship like this.

One night, I woke up and heard someone crying. I came out of my room to find that one of my fraternity brother's parents were telling him that his sister had just died in a car accident. That was one of the hardest things I've ever had to watch.

These things are all evidences that things are not as they should be.

This is where we find ourselves now in the story of the world - knowing that something is wrong but living in hopelessness because we aren't sure what to do. Or, perhaps we are living in denial of the fact that things aren't as they are supposed to be.

If you have ever longed for your fraternity or sorority to flee from its muddy waters and maneuver itself into a position to change the world, then you'll agree with me that things need to change.

So, let's start at the beginning of the story to find out where we are now.

PART 2 OF 10 GOD IMAGE, GREEK IMAGE

In the beginning...



GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 1

God, a fairy tale type of author, flexed his creativity and brought about something out of nothing. He created a world full of beauty and order. In the midst of all this, he created the most beautiful thing of all - us.

We are God's masterpiece.

His image on earth.

This makes us significant. This makes us valuable. The God of the Universe decided to display his attributes, his character, his personality, his beauty, through us. We radiate his image here on earth.

The first image bearers, our ancestral parents, had the good life. They roamed around naked because that was the thing to do. No shame. No worries. They were living it up in the garden.

In the garden, things were as they were supposed to be.

Then God gave them a big goal to accomplish. Fill the whole earth with more image bearers. And then, these image bearers would make the rest of the earth like the garden so that God's image would be increasingly revealed in every person and thing on the planet.

In the beginning of Greek Life, the goal was very similar.

The founders of our organizations wanted to make something out of nothing. They created an image that was to be spread across the country and influence the world.

Where there was a lack of community, they created community. Where there was a lack of service, they created service. Where there was a lack of mature leaders, they produced mature leaders for the world. They wanted to make a normal man into a man of honor. They wanted to make a normal woman into a woman of dignity.

But something went terribly wrong.

How did we go from that to what we have now? How did we go from honor and dignity to hazing and alcoholism? How did the campus administration, who used to serve as mentors to the Greek system, suddenly become pessimistic toward the Greek system?

I think we can all agree that the original image has been tarnished.

Like our first ancestors, we have dropped the ball. We experimented and the experiment went bad.

PART 3 OF 10 A TARNISHED IMAGE

Our ancestral parents were given the opportunity to either radiate the image of God or tarnish the image of God. They had the ability to hallow the image of God or hollow the image of God. Because of their failed experiment, they did the latter.

They experimented with life apart from God. Temptation and deception came a knocking and got the best of them. They submitted or gave in to the deceiver, who took the truth and twisted it.

God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree... lest you die." But the deceiver said, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God...." Sounded pretty good. And so they ate.

Disobedience. Rebellion. Experimentation. Missing the mark of perfection. These all fall under the umbrella of sin.



GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 1

And we've inherited it from our parents.

Just as the HIV virus is a physically transmitted disease, which leads to physical death, sin is a spiritually transmitted disease, which leads to spiritual death.

Want more good news?

Because we were given dominion over the entire world since the beginning, not only have we fallen, but the whole cosmos (which is under our care) has fallen. You won't find very many environmentalists arguing with this truth.

Fraternalities and sororities are not excluded from fallenness - which means that Greek things are messed up. Let's take a brief moment to ponder the mess we've gotten ourselves into. So why are Greek things the way they are now?

Let's look at one brief example - hazing.

The World Wars may have played a small part in the evolution of hazing.

"World War I, the depression of the 1930's, and World War II were periods of crisis which the fraternities weathered gallantly but which nevertheless helped mold them into a changed institution... Many left to fight... It is estimated that 325,000 fraternity men and women were in uniform. When World War II ended, the fraternity situation changed almost overnight from a famine to a feast. Men flocked back to their campuses not only to resume their studies, but to enjoy college life and particularly fraternity life. Contrary to all the predictions of poorly informed columnists, these men, matured by the war wanted the joys and satisfaction that came with collegiate brotherhood, and so flocked into chapter houses. Many who couldn't afford college before, now could because of the GI bill - which took care of a lot of expenses." (Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities)

It is amazing to see how many fraternity and sorority members made the sacrifice to go over and serve. And it sounds like many military men and women, who weren't previously connected to Greek Life, did so after returning from the war.

Whereas fraternities and sororities were once known as highly academic, the GI Bill allowed a soldier of any academic level to enter college and join a fraternity or sorority. Thus, the environments changed dramatically overnight.

With the return of the soldiers, it may be possible that a more military-like discipline entered into Greek Life. And it is also possible that over the years we could have twisted this practice of discipline into something negative, which was originally intended for good. Whatever reasons there are for the cause and evolution of hazing, all we know now is that we are in a hard place - trying to gain respect and get our image back.

Things are messed up.

Things meaning the world. Things meaning you.

If we, the image tarnishers, can't undo the mess, what is God going to do about it? How is he going to produce a solution for us - the problem?



GREEK THINGS DIALOGUE: WEEK 1

DIALOGUE

What are some evidences in your fraternity or sorority of things not being what they are supposed to be? Share some specific examples or stories.

What are some evidences in your own life of things not being what they are supposed to be?

Summarize what the phrase “being made in the image of God” means.

What is one thing that brings you alive? How might this give you a clue as to what God is like?

Discuss the similarities between the goals of God’s image and the goals of the Greek image. Hint: Look at Part 2 of the article.

How did the article help you to understand sin better? How would you describe “sin” to a friend?

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