



What makes Faith Church unique?

Life Group Work Sheet (Leader's Guide)

Bible

September 22, 2013

Getting to Know Each Other

1. What is your favorite passage or story of the Bible? Why? What does this text tell you about who God is and what God has done?

The purpose of this question is to get your group thinking about the Bible. Hopefully everyone in your group—from the oldest to the newest Christian has a Bible passage that they have latched on to. For some it may be a story from the Old Testament (David and Goliath); for others it may be a simple verse (John 3:16).

There aren't any wrong answers at this point!

After asking this question, follow up with the question of what this passage reveals about who God is and what God has done. Scripture teaches us about these two aspects of God. This may encourage those in your group to begin looking at Scripture through new eyes: Scripture isn't primarily about us or about humans. It is the story of God's redemption of fallen humanity.

Into the Bible

Read Deuteronomy 8:1-3.

2. This passage looks back at Israel's time in the wilderness where they relied on God's provision for everything from food and clothing to protection from their enemies. **How does this context help us understand the role of God's provision through his Word in our lives?**

Understanding the context of Deuteronomy 8 shows us the importance of God's word in our lives. Especially in our day and age where there are so many possible distractions to God and his Word, passages such as Deuteronomy 8 put things into perspective. Just as God provided food for the Israelites in the wilderness, so also he provides food for us (even though it may not be as direct). In the same way, God nourishes his children through his Word.

It may be helpful to take this comparison and put it into very tangible terms. Ask anyone if they have fasted before, if they have gone without food for an extended period of time. After that, compare that hunger and that need for food to our need for God's sustaining Word, even though we often don't realize it.

3. Jesus quotes v. 3 during his temptation (Matt. 4:1-11). **How does this truth encourage us in the midst of temptation?** Consider the following:
 - a. You are tempted to stop reading the Bible because you can't understand it or you don't think it applies to your life.

Many people in your group may find themselves in this situation. Discouragement is natural when we know that we should be reading God's word, but when we find it difficult. In times like these, it may be best to seek the help of a friend who is older in the faith. Those older in the faith can walk through the Bible with younger Christians to provide this guidance. For those in your group who struggle with this temptation, encourage them to seek out those in the church who can help them with this. Perhaps have a list prepared before Life Group of the people who would be able to help in this regard.

- b. Your days become so busy that you begin neglecting time in the Bible.

Another temptation that we find ourselves susceptible to in our culture is to sacrifice Bible reading when our lives become too busy. A few starter questions to ask when going through this may be “Do any of you find this to be a problem? Why do we find this a temptation?” I believe that this is a temptation because we don’t truly understand the words that are said in Deuteronomy 8.

For people who find themselves in this situation, it is necessary to set aside some time to reevaluate priorities. The number of hours in a day are limited, and so it will take an intentional approach to say no to other things so that you will be able to say yes to this important area.

Read Psalm 1.

4. This Psalm speaks of the importance of saturating yourself in God’s Word. **How does this imagery put flesh on the priority of reading the Bible?**

The contrast here between a tree and dust is one that is quite clear. While this contrast is made between the righteous man and the wicked man, do not pass over why the righteous man is considered righteous. Not only because he *reads* the Bible consistently, but because he *meditates* on it. And as a part of that meditation, he puts what he studies into practice. This question bleeds into the next question, which looks at the application of this truth.

5. Take a moment and reflect on your Bible reading habits. **Are you like a sturdy, healthy tree with deep roots? Or are you more like dust blown by the wind?**

This question is more personal and introspective. If your group is comfortable sharing, it would be an encouragement to all to share at this point. If your group is still getting to know each other, it is fine just to have a minute of reflection and then move on to the next question.

Read Psalm 119:9-16.

6. Ps. 119 (the longest chapter in the Bible) is devoted entirely to the importance of God’s Word. These verses connect holy living with a commitment to studying the Bible. **How are these two connected? How does reading the Bible help produce the fruit of righteousness in our lives? Conversely, how does neglecting the Bible hinder fruit of righteousness in our lives?**

This picks up on a theme discussed in the previous section. Holiness and a commitment to studying God’s Word are connected because holiness is often the fruit of Bible reading. When we study the Bible consistently, we immerse ourselves in the thoughts and ways of God. As this becomes more and more consistent, and as we do this longer and longer, it becomes a part of who we are. We begin to pray God’s thoughts to God, and we begin to think in a similar way that he does. We slowly become more like him when we read the Bible consistently with an open and receptive heart.

In the same way, when we *do not* study God’s Word, it becomes easier to think in the same way the world does, because we are not immersed in the way that God thinks and speaks. The longer we are removed from the influence of God’s word, the easier it is to doubt, to disobey, and to follow our own “wisdom.”

7. Consider your answers to questions 5 and 6. **How can you apply these truths to your life?**

This is another question that is more reflective. A proper answer could be a commitment from the people in your group to study their Bibles more. For others, it is to be intentional about not just opening the Bible, but meditating on it. For some, it may deal with memorization. Take some time to walk through this as a group. Encourage those in your group to take some time and think through this application for their own lives.

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-16.

8. In this passage, Paul tells us how Scripture can be used in our lives. **Define the terms that he uses in this passage. How can Scripture accomplish these purposes in your own life and context?** If you are able, think of a specific passage that could fit each of these categories:
- a. **Teaching.**

Interestingly enough, these first two uses of Scripture relate to doctrine (what you believe), while the last two relate to practice (how you act). With that in mind, the 'teaching' Scripture does refers to the positive things that it teaches us; how it informs our understanding of God, of what he does, of ourselves, etc.

Take some time as a group to share ways that God is teaching you or has taught you through his word. It may be helpful for you as the leader to prepare some examples in advance to get things started.

- b. **Reproof.**

If teaching refers to the positive aspect of doctrine, this refers to the 'negative' aspect of doctrine. Reproof refers to the correction (not to be confused with below) of incorrect beliefs that we may have. A popular example today: many people in America believe in God, but there is a significant portion of that group who do not believe that God is wrathful/there is a hell. In this situation, Scripture corrects this incorrect assumption of God's perfect character by showing that while God is loving and compassionate, as a part of his holiness he is also just and wrathful.

Again, take some time as a group to share ways that God is teaching you or has taught you through his word. It may be helpful for you as the leader to prepare some examples in advance to get things started.

- c. **Correction.**

These last two refer to how Scripture informs our practice. This specific term then is referring to correction in our practical lives (correcting how we live). This comes back to the questions from Ps. 1 and Ps. 119 above. A great example of this would be one of the 'vice and virtue lists' found in Paul's letters. Look at Colossians 3:5-11 for a starting point. In these verses, Scripture provides a helpful correction of the practicing Christian's life.

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- d. **Training in righteousness.**

This final category looks at how we can live holy lives. Many times we define holiness by what it *isn't*; but that's only part of the equation. The second part is also the growth of righteous virtues. After sharing what they should avoid in Colossians 3:5-11, Paul then lists ways that the Colossian church can grow in righteousness in vv. 12-17. This is an example of Scripture providing training in righteousness.

Again, take some time as a group to share ways that God is teaching you or has taught you through his word. It may be helpful for you as the leader to prepare some examples in advance to get things started.