

Small Group Homework

For the week of January 29, 2017

GETTING STARTED

Do you have a favorite theme park, or a favorite ride? (Maybe your favorite is the same as someone else in your group. It's a small world, after all.)

LOOKING BACK

Looking back on Sunday, is there anything that stood out to you, confused you, or challenged you?

MY STORY

1. Has there ever been a time when you had to overcome a fear in order to do what you knew was God's will?
2. When we bump up against a fear, an unwillingness, or an apparent inability to follow God, we find an opportunity for prayer. What barrier can you be praying for God to break through in your life?

DIGGING DEEPER

Read **James 2:14,19-20 (NLT)**: ¹⁴What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?...¹⁹ You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. ²⁰ How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless?

1. Even though in John 3:16, John says everyone who believes in Jesus will have eternal life, James clarifies that there is a type of belief that doesn't lead to salvation. How would you explain to someone the difference between acknowledging Jesus and *really* believing in Him?
2. Some people say they don't live by faith, but they just haven't reflected on all of the things we trust in every day. Even simply sitting in a chair is putting our faith in that chair to hold us up; or we take a pill trusting that it is medicine, not poison. (How do we know for sure?) What is another example of something people do regularly without even realizing it is an act of faith?

One of the best-known biblical examples of faith is the account of David (a young Israelite shepherd) and Goliath (a giant Philistine warrior). David was delivering food to his brothers on the front lines of an impending battle when he overheard Goliath taunting and intimidating King Saul's whole army. Read **1 Samuel 17:32-37 (NLT)**:

³² "Don't worry about this Philistine," David told Saul. "I'll go fight him!" ³³ "Don't be ridiculous!" Saul replied. "There's no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You're only a boy, and he's been a man of war since his youth." ³⁴ But David persisted. "I have been taking care of my father's sheep and goats," he said. "When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, ³⁵ I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. ³⁶ I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God! ³⁷ The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!" Saul finally consented. "All right, go ahead," he said. "And may the LORD be with you!"

1. David had a history of being in dangerous situations and experiencing God's help. His faith developed as he trusted God. What are some steps of faith you have taken where you saw God come through?
2. Sometimes people assume all faith is blind faith, belief without any supporting evidence. David had reasons for his faith. What reasons do you have to believe in Jesus and to trust Him as Savior of the world?

Read **2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NLT)**: ⁶ Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. ⁷ You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." ⁸ And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.

1. How are faith and finances connected in Paul's instructions above?
2. What are some ways disciples can generously give through the Spirit in addition to financial generosity?

PRAYERS: