



Dear LifeGroup Leader,

This week we begin a 2-part series on God Questions.

In the praxis, I'm asking you to do something that might be a bit tricky.

As we ask God questions, often the way we ask a question is as important as the answer we receive. As you look over the praxis section, I encourage you to think about how you might facilitate the conversation. The goal is to keep the plate spinning. Sometimes in a group we prematurely, and anxiously, answer questions that we haven't yet honored or understood. This will be an exercise in helping your group to stay in the posture of asking a question TOGETHER, rather than answering it.

Asking an open question keeps us in a posture of humility and curiosity. I'm curious how you'll be able to stretch into this kind of space with your group... resisting your and other's interest in answering. See if you can set the tone toward this asking posture, and see what happens in your group!

-Connor



God Questions

Is the Bible Reliable?

In this 2-part series, Dave addresses commonly asked questions about our faith. From time to time, each of us gets hung up on difficult questions, and it's hard to find answers that help us move forward. In this first sermon, Dave addresses the question, "Is the Bible reliable?" The way the Bible was created gives us assurance that its contents are accurate to the actual experiences of its writers. The volume, consistency, and historicity of manuscripts used to create the Bible is unparalleled. This understanding helps us to appreciate the depth, complexity, and truth of the Bible.

FOCAL POINT: If the Bible is reliable and true, our reading of it is a sacred and important act.



Getting Started

Catch up together about how your week has been, possibly also revisit last week's meeting.

- ▶ What is your first memory of reading a Bible?



Exploring Scripture

Read the following passage together.

Psalm 119:105

- ▶ Where do you hear God's heart in this passage?
- ▶ Read excerpt of Dave's sermon.



Reflection

Take time to reflect together about the passage.

- ▶ What is your reaction when you hear about the history of the manuscripts used to compile the Bible?
- ▶ How does this impact your view of the Bible?
- ▶ What questions does this discussion raise for you concerning the Bible?



Praxis

With the understanding that we gathered here are the body of Christ, let's allow the truth from today's scripture to impact us as a LifeGroup.

- ▶ The practice of asking questions is often reduced to a transactional, linear arrangement. One person asks a question, one person answers. One person doesn't know, another person provides knowledge. This process, while logistically required at times, can sometimes snub our wonder, and cut off our natural curiosity and process of discovery. Let's practice a different way of asking questions together that allows us to dwell in the unknown together, encountering God and our own limitations.
- ▶ Let's start with a question that is on a person's mind regarding the Bible. When that person poses the question, instead of answering it, think for yourself about a part of you that also asks the same question or has a similar struggle. Instead of answering the person's question, let's try to elaborate on the question. What other stories or questions does this question bring up for you? What can you admit about what you don't know? Let's see how far we can take this, trusting that at times, the more we elaborate the question, the closer we come to experiencing mystery, and maybe arrive at a more authentic response.



Moving Outward

Challenge each other to live out God's truth this week.

- ▶ Ask 5 questions about God this week. Write them down as they come to you.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

From Dave's Sermon:

How do the scriptures measure up to other ancient manuscripts in relation to their integrity? I hear often that the line of evidence of scripture is suspect. Some have even claimed that the New Testament was arbitrarily chosen by a church council in the fourth century. When the story gets retold I have heard that the church excluded all the books that offered a different version of the story. It's important that we approach such issue with scholarship not myth. First of all, the New Testament as we know it was circulating in parts and pieces before the final gospels were even written. Paul's letters were already making the rounds in the churches before any of the gospels writers compiled their accounts. In additions, pericopes of the teachings and miracles of Jesus were being taught and used in the first century. By the early second century the writings of the apostles were already grouped, collected and preserved as sacred. Let me give you a point of comparison.

When you compare ancient manuscripts of our most treasured writings you might be surprised at how the New Testament stacks up.

Homer's Iliad was written around 700 B.C. We have no idea the date of the earliest known manuscript. We know that no original manuscripts survived, but copies were handed down. Of those oldest copies that we cannot date there are 643 known. Most of us have been asked to read these classics of literature and no one seems to worry that they were written by anyone other than Homer.

The History of Heroditus was written in 425 B.C. The oldest known copy dates to 900 A.D. and there are 8 in all.

The famous collections of the first century historian Jospheus was written around 70 A.D. The earliest manuscript dates to 400 A.D. and there are 9 known.

The New Testament by comparison was written between 35-100 A.D. The earliest known manuscript dates to 125 A.D. And the number of manuscripts in existence that testify to the accuracy of the work, 5735!