

Life Trails Small Group Study Guide

Lesson 32 – Wilderness Guide 5

From Sunday, June 5, 2022

Warm Up:

Of the ten following “facts,” only two are true. As a group try to figure out which the true ones are. (true are in bold)

1. Cracking knuckles leads to arthritis.
2. **Old eggs float in water.**
3. Einstein flunked math.
4. **Cotton candy was invented by a dentist.**
5. It takes seven years for gum to digest.
6. Caffeine dehydrates you.
7. You can see the Great Wall of China from space.
8. Blood is blue inside of your body.
9. A flushed toilet swirls the opposite way in the southern hemisphere.
10. Humans only use 10% of their brains.

Discuss

- What made you question some of the “facts” more than others?
- Where you surprised to learn that some things that you may have been told are true actually aren't?
- What role does doubt play in life? Is it always bad? Or, when does it become bad?

Debrief:

Truth only transforms us as we take action. A small group discussion can help us think more clearly, but we also need to challenge each other to take steps of faith. Taking time to debrief reminds us that faith needs to be lived out every day.

From May 15

- Set aside some time in the next week for personal introspection and soul-searching. At that time ask God to show you the things in your life where you actually need to repent. Work through them one at a time, identify and confess the sin, then determine how to live differently in those areas of your life. Remember, repentance should result in life change.

From May 22

- Set aside some time to do some self-inspection. Judging by what you give the most effort and attention to in life, what would an observer say is your definition of success? Where does it need to change, and what would be one step you could take? Talk about taking that step.

From the message:

- What are some of the faith expectations you have had? Have any of them ever become a source of doubt in your life?
- What are some of those faith “expectations”? Are they correct?
Examples:
 - If I am generous, I will not have financial problems.
 - If I pray, God will make it clear what I am supposed to do.
- Have you ever had a situation where you tried to do the right thing and it didn’t turn out well? What did you think?
- Do you struggle more with doubts about God, doubts from your own experiences, or doubts based on what others might say or think?

From the passage: *Matthew 11:1-11*

- John asked, “Are you the One?” How would you define or describe his doubts?
- Why do you think John was asking this question of Jesus? Why do you think that Jesus answered as he did?
- Compare what Jesus says with what Isaiah said (see Isaiah 35:4-6; 61:1). What does Jesus add? What does he omit? Why might this have significance regarding John’s situation?
- Why did Jesus tell John’s disciples to report what “you have seen and heard”? What have you seen and heard in your own life of faith that gives you confidence in Jesus, or in your faith?

For discussion:

- What do you think: Are doubts always negative? Or can they be neutral? Or how about positive?

- Do you ever remember having heard someone talk about their spiritual / faith doubts in a church setting? How did it affect you?
- What are some of the biggest doubts that you have (or have had) in regards to your faith?
- How can we use the Bible to help us in times of doubt? (As a group, take one of the doubts expressed in response to the last question and try to identify relevant scriptures)
- What might be some other ways to work through doubts?
- Can you create a hypothetical situation (or it could be real) where you can outline the dangerous spiral of doubt? → disappointment → disillusionment → deconstruction → disbelief
- Do you know people who have become calloused or cynical in their faith? What role has doubt played – and how has it played out?
- What factors help increase faith and decrease doubt?

Activation:

Identify an area of doubt in your faith. It may involve something about God that you struggle with. It may be something that you were taught that you are wondering if it is true. Maybe it is a situation where your experience seems to be contrary to what you believe. You could go any number of directions. But then...do your homework. How can you explore more and learn more – and how will you use the Bible as part of that process? Discuss this exercise with your group next time you meet.