

Life Trails Small Group Study Guide

Lesson 25 – The Cross Walk 2

From Sunday, April 3

Warm Up:

Can you as a group identify what these phobias are?

- Arachnophobia (fear of spiders)
- Ophidiophobia (fear of snakes)
- Acrophobia (fear of heights)
- Astraphobia (fear of thunder and lightning)
- Mysophobia (fear of germs)
- Glossophobia (fear of public speaking)
- Syngenesophobia (fear of relatives)
- Xanthophobia (fear of the color yellow)
- Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia (fear of long words)

Discuss

- Do you have some of these or other fears? Would you consider your fears to be rational or not?
- Have you ever experienced fear in your faith? What caused it – and why?
- Would you equate the difficulty of trusting God some times as fear- related?

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 March 20

- Choose one of the two practices shared to try for yourself – either schedule and have a personal retreat (even if it's only for a couple of hours), or work to put together your rule of life. *(You might even use a retreat as a time to work on a rule of life.)* Share your experiences with the group.

From March 27

What practical steps can you take this week to demonstrate humility in your relationships?

- What steps can you take to set aside the pursuit of Status and look to be about God's will in your life?

- Where in your life do you need obey God – regardless the cost?
- What verse do you need to memorize that would remind you to pursue choices that impact eternity rather than the here and now?

Share your Story:

Have you been “sharing your stories” in your small group? We really want to encourage everyone to engage in that activity! Maybe it needs to be a New Year’s Resolution for your group!

From the message:

- When Jesus was talking about a cross – he was referring to its representation of death, not to its weight. What is the difference? And how do we sometimes miss the point?
- It was suggested that Jesus’ declaration was actually an invitation to a more meaningful or rewarding life. What do you think?
- It’s easy to say that we trust God and to believe that we can – so why is it such a struggle sometimes? What are the areas where you find it most difficult to trust him?

From the passage: *Read Luke 9:23-27, 57-62*

- What is the context of this incident? How does it help us to understand the passage? (It would be easy to throw away your career and future to follow a Messiah about to bring in a Kingdom; maybe not so much to follow a guy predicting his death?)
- To the disciples, the cross was a form of execution. What do you think they were thinking when they heard Jesus make this statement?
- What might be some ways that people try to “save” their “lives” while losing them?
- The three incidents recorded at the end of the chapter (vs. 57-62) – what light do they shed on the idea of following Christ?

For discussion:

- As you consider your experiences of following Jesus – what has been better than you might have expected? What has been more difficult?

- What might be some typical ambitions, dreams or goals of people who are not followers of Jesus? How would they contrast to someone who is “taking up his cross” to follow Jesus?
- Self-denial is a simple idea – what makes it so hard? What might be some ways that we can appropriately deny ourselves?
- This is not a matter of accepting a cross, but of choosing a cross. What do you see as the difference?
- Why do you think Jesus included the idea of “taking up one’s cross” as part of the discipleship process?
- If you had to put the phrase “take up your cross” into today’s words – what would you say?
- What do you think is the most difficult part of following Jesus? How about most rewarding?
- Have you had an experience when trusting Jesus was hard, but you did so and experienced a positive result?
- What does it look like to take up your cross on a daily basis?

Activation:

Most of us would be likely to say that we trust God in general, but is there some specific area of your life where spiritual trust is difficult? Once you have identified the area, can you address it? Maybe that means a heart-felt conversation with God. Maybe that means taking a step of obedience. Maybe that means finally surrendering an area of your life. If possible, share your response /action with your group next time.