

## Life Trails Small Group Study Guide

### Lesson 33 – Wilderness Guide 6

From Sunday, June 12, 2022

#### Warm Up:

Offer the following options and then discuss why people choose one over the other.

Would you rather...

1. Go scuba diving or sky diving?
2. Be known for your intelligence or your sense of humor?
3. Be more like your father or more like your mother?
4. Be lost in the jungle or at sea?
5. Live in a wilderness or live in a city?
6. Be respected or be popular?
7. Live in today's world or the world of the past?
8. Take the easy road or the hard road?
9. Be brave or be safe?
10. Be feared or be liked?

#### Discuss

- What were the factors that influenced your decisions?
- What might be some real choices that we face in life where we have to choose "either/or"?

#### 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 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 June 5

- 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.

**From the message:**

- How would you describe real strength or “spiritual ruggedness”?
- When we say that a person has good character, what do we mean?
- Which of the five qualities mentioned (selflessness, righteousness, boldness, winsomeness, faithfulness) resonates the most with you?
- What are some “wilderness experiences” that you have had – and how have they shaped you?

**From the passage: *Mark 6:14-29***

- The end of verse 20 is difficult to translate. The NIV reads, “he [Herod] was greatly puzzled,” while the KJV reads “when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.” What light does this shed on the story?
- Herodias was “nursing a grudge” against John the Baptist. Why? Why do we tend to resent the people telling us the truth rather than listen to them?
- We all like stories that end happily, yet this one doesn’t. So do you think John got it wrong or right? Why?
- Do you believe that God will always honor our decisions for right? In what ways?

**For discussion:**

- Who is the strongest person that you know? Why do you think that?
- What are some of the toughest challenges that you are facing right now?
- How might today’s world – or your personal world – be compared to a wilderness?
- When you face a “wilderness experience,” do you feel more challenged or more defeated? What is the deciding factor?
- How can a person develop more inner drive and determination?

- When in your past have you faced a wilderness situation – and how did you respond? Why did you make that choice? How did it turn out?
- What are some steps that a person can take to develop more spiritual ruggedness in his life?
- What of John’s story (and this series) has had the most impact on you?

**Activation:**

Take a moment to assess your spiritual ruggedness. You might ask yourself these questions:

- What gets me most discouraged or sidetracked?
- What do I tend to do when facing a difficulty?
- Where have I continued to persevere in the face of hardship or challenge?
- When have I chose (or do I choose) to take the easy way out?

Identify one area/quality where you need to develop more spiritual strength and take a step. Share with your group your step and your progress.