

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 17, 2013

QUICK REVIEW: Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY:

1. Back during your high school years how did you handle for a test? (pick any that apply)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Study long and hard | <input type="checkbox"/> Stress case |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cram it in the night before | <input type="checkbox"/> Skip class |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wing it | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bring it on/like the challenge | |

2. This week we heard that we all encounter small tests as we live life week to week. Can you think of any "pop quizzes/tests" you encounter on a regular basis in any of the categories below?

- ⇒ Family
- ⇒ Work or Co-workers
- ⇒ Finances
- ⇒ Courage
- ⇒ Forgiveness
- ⇒ Kindness
- ⇒ Other

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Abraham's example of trusting God with the life of his son can leave us wondering, "How could I ever have that kind of faith and trust God that much?" How do the following passages help you deal with this question?

Mark 9:14-24

John 4:46-53

Hebrews 12:1-3

2. Perspective means a lot when we find ourselves in a small or big test. How is Paul's perspective in 2 Corinthians 1:3-11 contrary to how most of us would normally think when facing challenges or trials?

What part of this Scripture is most encouraging to you?

What part is most challenging?

If you are facing a great difficulty or challenge, what would you want someone to do (or not do) in their attempt to comfort or help you?

3. When encountering a test or trial, sometimes we can think we have to just be positive to show we're remaining faithful. Psalm 77 shows how we can be real about what's going on and what we think in the midst of a tough situation and still remain faithful. After reading Psalm 77, jot down a few of your own thoughts and/or emotions about a tough season in your life or test you've encountered. Also try to include anything you can think of that God has done for you?

What's challenging about being honest like this with God?

TAKING IT HOME

Looking back at this week's teaching and study, what's the most important thing to remember?

Do you have any prayer requests you'd like to share with your group?

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1. Abraham's example of trusting God with the life of his son can leave us wondering, "How could I ever have that kind of faith and trust God that much?" How do the following passages help you deal with this question?

Mark 9:14-24

When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. [15] As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

[16] "What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.

[17] A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. [18] Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."

[19] "O unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."

[20] So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

[21] Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"
"From childhood," he answered. [22] "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."
[23] "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."
[24] Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"
[NIV]

John 4:46-53

Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. [47] When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

[48] "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe."

[49] The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

[50] Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live."

The man took Jesus at his word and departed. [51] While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. [52] When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour."

[53] Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and all his household believed. [NIV]

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. [2] Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. [3] Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. [NIV]

2. Perspective means a lot when we find ourselves in a small or big test. How is Paul's perspective in 2 Corinthians 1:3-11 contrary to how most of us would normally think when facing challenges or trials?

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. [5] For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. [6] If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. [7] And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

[8] We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. [9] Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But

this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. [10] He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, [11] as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. [NIV]

What part of this Scripture is most encouraging to you?

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3. When encountering a test or trial, sometimes we can think we have to just be positive to show we're remaining faithful. Psalm 77 shows how we can be real about what's going on and what we think in the midst of a tough situation and still remain faithful. After reading Psalm 77, jot down a few of your own thoughts and/or emotions about a tough season in your life or test you've encountered. Also try to include anything you can think of that God has done for you?

Psalm 77:1-20

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. Of Asaph. A psalm.

I cried out to God for help;

I cried out to God to hear me.

[2] When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;
at night I stretched out untiring hands
and my soul refused to be comforted.

[3] I remembered you, O God, and I groaned;
I mused, and my spirit grew faint.

Selah

[4] You kept my eyes from closing;
I was too troubled to speak.

[5] I thought about the former days,
the years of long ago;

[6] I remembered my songs in the night.
My heart mused and my spirit inquired:

[7] "Will the Lord reject forever?"

Will he never show his favor again?
[8] Has his unfailing love vanished forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?
[9] Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?"

Selah

[10] Then I thought, "To this I will appeal:
the years of the right hand of the Most High."
[11] I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.
[12] I will meditate on all your works
and consider all your mighty deeds.

[13] Your ways, O God, are holy.
What god is so great as our God?
[14] You are the God who performs miracles;
you display your power among the peoples.
[15] With your mighty arm you redeemed your people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.

Selah

[16] The waters saw you, O God,
the waters saw you and writhed;
the very depths were convulsed.
[17] The clouds poured down water,
the skies resounded with thunder;
your arrows flashed back and forth.
[18] Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind,
your lightning lit up the world;
the earth trembled and quaked.
[19] Your path led through the sea,
your way through the mighty waters,
though your footprints were not seen.
[20] You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron. [NIV]

What's challenging about being honest like this with God?

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