



Lesson 3

To Begin ...

Other than the Bible, what book or books have greatly influenced you and why?

Hey Life Group Leaders! Welcome to Week 3 of our new Life Group Video Series, "Built Faith Tough," where we will study through several different Scripture passages dealing with building faith in Jesus! We hope that this series will be uplifting, challenging, and help you find your next step in your journey with God!

You have six questions based the video lesson this week! Remember that these Leader Notes are to serve as a guide for further and deepening conversation with your Life Group, not as the answers! Enjoy this week's discussion and always remember to ask an extra question such as "Why do you believe that?" to draw out some more conversation from your group members!

To start off this lesson, you have a question above that everyone in your group should be able to answer. It is not too personal, but you should have fun with it! Please make sure that your group feels the safety of sharing within the group. There is no right or wrong answer here. No snap judgments or quick fixes. And as always, be encouraging and show grace as your group members are working through their salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

Discussion Prompts

1. Romans 10:17 says that faith comes from hearing the message through the Word of Christ. What does that mean? How does that happen? Elsewhere in scripture, faith is described as a gift and yet Romans 10:17 says that faith comes from hearing ... how can both be true at the same time?

Romans 10:17 reads, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ."

Some answers may include that in this section of the Romans letter, Paul has quoted several Old Testament passages to show that the conditions described in vs. 14-15 had been met for Israel. The gospel message was proclaimed throughout the Roman Empire. The Jews listened and simply did not believe. The Gentiles heard too, and many embraced it. Paul's citations show that the Gentile conversion was predicted in the Old Testament.

Ultimately, all peoples are a disobedient and defiant people. Israel was singled out in this way due to their consistent rejection of God's message and messengers. To hear the Good News of Jesus is to accept and believe. Hearing and rejecting it at best does nothing, and at worst brings chaos and disorder.

Some answers may include that the gift is hearing the Good News of Jesus' gospel message. His kingdom is indeed here with us and he calls us to be a part of what he is doing on this earth. For those that have heard, accepted, and believe enough to take an active part in what God is doing through his church on this earth, there is a sense of peace and comfort that accompanies fulfilling your part in his kingdom. That's a pretty good gift.

2. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. What does it mean that scripture is God-breathed (hint-read Genesis 2:7)? How is the Bible described here? How are Paul's words about the Bible still relevant today?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 reads, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Genesis 2:7 reads, "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

Some answers may include that it the whole Bible is God's inspired word. Because it is inspired and trustworthy, we should read it and apply it to our lives. The Bible is our standard for testing everything else that claims to be true. It is our safeguard against false teaching and our source of guidance for how we should live. It is our only source of knowledge about how we can be saved. God wants to show you what is true and equip you to live for him.

Some answers to this question may include that the truths written in the Bible about God are timeless and endure through any culture. Loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving our neighbors as ourselves is relevant no matter when or where you live. We study the Bible to know how to do good, completing Christ's work in our communities, across our nation, and around the world.

3. Read Isaiah 55:11. In your opinion, how has the Bible always succeeded and never failed? Share about a time when the Bible's wisdom helped you navigate a difficult situation or complex decision?

Isaiah 55:11 reads, "so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

Some answers may include that the word of God is not simply a collection of words from God, but a vehicle for communicating ideas. It discerns what is within us, both good and evil requiring decisions made to follow his commands. We must not only listen to the word, but we must also let it shape our lives. Followed obediently, a person is transformed from the inside out toward the image of Jesus.

The last part of this question is one that everyone in your group should be able to answer because it is asking them to share their stories. Everyone will probably have very different answers although some may be reluctant to share because they're embarrassed about something. Be very encouraging as you allow people to share. Remember please, no snap judgments or quick fixes. And as always, be encouraging and show grace as your group members are working through their salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

4. According to Hebrews 4:12, how is the Bible described and what does the Bible do? How have you seen the Bible judge your thoughts and attitudes, as well as the thoughts and attitudes of others?

Hebrews 4:12 reads, "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

Some answers to this question may include that the Bible is the living voice of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is sharp like a sword, discerning the intentions of the heart, which though hidden from human sight, are naked and exposed before God. The

decisive criterion for the spiritual life is thus not impulsive activism or emotional comfort, but the living word of God that clarifies our minds, incites our hearts, and quickens our wills.

The last part of this question is one that everyone in your group should be able to answer because it is asking for their opinions. Everyone will probably have very different answers to this which is great! Allow people to share. Remember please, no snap judgments or quick fixes. And as always, be encouraging and show grace as your group members are working through their salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

5. Read Psalm 19:7-11, and list the different ways the Bible is described, along with what the Bible does. Out of all the ways the Bible is described, which description resonates with you the most and why?

Psalm 19:7-11 reads, "The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

Some answers may include that the Bible is perfect, refreshing, trustworthy for making people who read it and apply the teachings wiser. It is right and brings joy. It brings clear vision as it guides. It is pure and endures. It is steadfast and unwavering in its quality of being right making it more valued than gold and sweeter than anything you've ever tasted. It has the ability to keep people on the right path, allowing them to thrive in life.

The last part of this question is one that everyone in your group should be able to answer because it is asking for their opinions. Everyone will probably have very different answers to this which is great! Allow people to share. Remember please, no snap judgments or quick fixes. And as always, be encouraging and show grace as your group members are working through their salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

6. The 19th century German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, was an outspoken critic of the Bible and stated the following about Christianity: "It drove the movement for the abolition of slavery and promoted care for the weak, such as widows, orphans, the handicapped, and leprosy patients. From liberating and rehabilitating temple prostitutes to reforming prisons and bringing sanity and morality to wars, the biblical tradition has been the most powerful civilizing force." As believers, we take Nietzsche's insult as a compliment. In your opinion, how has the Bible made society better?

This is another question that everyone in your group should be able to answer because it is asking for their opinions. Some may capitalize on a few of the examples that Nietzsche wrote about while others will have different examples that may be more personal in nature. Allow people to share. Remember please, no snap judgments or quick fixes. And as always, be encouraging and show grace as your group members are working through their salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12).

Pray out your time together as a group. Remember to ask for prayer requests. Encourage one another to take steps, regardless of how small, toward Jesus and his kingdom.