

Chapter Five: God's Biggest Priority

This chapter and this week's discussion marks the half-way point in our journey to embrace the life-giving message of the Gospel together. We want to thank you again for taking this journey with us, and hope that it has taken you places in your relationship with Christ that will change you forever. We hope you don't sense the need to wrap your journey or your discussions into nice neat packaging each week. Instead, that you will flag places you want to revisit with the Holy Spirit. We sense that this week might take you to some of those places.

Getting Connected

This question was written to help people explore a time they simply trusted God, or had a radical faith in Him. But you'll notice the words "faith" and "trust" aren't used. Try not to use them either as you have people interact with this question. Help people briefly consider the practical implications of saying yes to God vs. saying no.

Highlights and Insights

While the opening question in this section is pretty much the same each week, to get people to talk about the highlights of the chapter for them, don't miss the last part of the opening question this week: *What emotions were conjured up as you read this chapter?* It's designed to help people process the internal impact of this chapter as they read. Interacting with the story of Mark is to enable people to begin considering the way that spiritual performance can take hold of our lives, even if we say we have "faith".

Biblical Focus

Perhaps in advance of asking people to put 2 Corinthians 12:9 in their own words, you might give them a couple minutes to write it out in their own words. Allow people time to read what they wrote. This exercise could be pivotal in helping them "get it" before talking about their own weaknesses and need for Christ. If you choose to have your group respond to the question in the blue shaded area, do it in advance of talking about Romans 1:17.

The Heart of the Matter

Please make sure that the discussion in this section allows time to make it very specific by having people respond to the last question: What is *one way* your relationship with God would be different if your obedience was rooted in a simple trust in Jesus rather than out of fear of disappointing God? Notice the italicized words. Don't allow people to talk about a variety of things (because we could all probably list a lot!). Instead opt for more people sharing one or two sentences, and nothing more. You might even say this – "one or two sentences".

In Conclusion...

Before your group wraps up, please remind them about what's in the blue shaded area at the bottom. Your willingness to set the pace for some of these experiences will go a long way in helping your group to become more comfortable experimenting with them as well.