

Simple - Studies in Mark

Session Three: Believe - Part 1 (including notes for leaders)

Welcome, opening prayer and worship

(5–15 minutes)

[Pray as you begin, asking God to be at work in your group, and enjoy a short time of worship together (e.g. singing, soaking, waiting on God in silence, praying through a Psalm, journaling, etc.).]

Introduction

(5 minutes)

[Read the paragraphs below aloud to introduce the session.]

Jesus' initial invitation is a simple one: follow. Watch, listen, consider - follow. But is that all that's necessary to connect with God? In this session, we learn that in time, those who follow find themselves drawn to take a second, simple step. A step that is available to everybody. And it is this next step that is the key to a relationship with God. Believe.

[As a group, look at one or more of the following statements (shortly!), and decide if you 'believe' them. Why (not)?

i) Life is fair, ii) Miracles do happen, iii) Doing what is right means obeying the law.]

Bible study

(15 minutes)

[Read Mark 9:14-24]

1. In vs. 23, Jesus says: "Everything is possible for him who believes". Describe as accurately as possible *what* someone needs to believe.
2. Vs. 23 "If you can?" For Jesus, the question was not whether He had the power to heal the boy. What was the question for Jesus?
3. In vs. 24, the boy's father says: "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" These statements seem to contradict each other. Try to explain what you think the father means.

Movie Clip

(15 minutes)

[Watch the clip from Andy Stanley's talk on the 'Simple' DVD. Go to 'Group Curriculum' -> 'Session 3' -> 'Continue'.]

Youtube link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01yorW6rfX0>

[Work through the questions below.]

1. Was there anything from the DVD that was new to you, or had an effect on you? Did you hear anything that raised more questions in your mind?
2. Do you think most people desire a right standing with God? What do you think are their reasons? What do you think most people would say if you asked them how a person gains a right standing before God?
3. Read Romans 3:21-22. The Jews believed that a right standing with God was found through following the law. But the law was put into place to point toward the need for a saviour. It is tempting to think that our right standing with God is based on following rules. Have you tried to earn God's approval in the past? Are you still trying to earn it? Explain.
4. Read Romans 3:23. What comes to mind when you think of God's glory? Is there anything that you have seen or experienced that might compare to God's glory?
5. If the standard is God's glory, His goodness and perfection, is it no wonder that we've all fallen short? How does it make you feel to know that no one can obtain right standing with God on his or her own?
6. If someone were to ask you, how would you explain how someone gains a right standing before God?

[Close by reading the following prayer aloud.]

From John 1:12. "...to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." Father God, we thank you that we are freely justified by your grace. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you have restored our right standing with the Father, through your sacrifice on the cross. Holy Spirit, we ask you to come alongside us and to lead us on the path of righteousness. We pray that when we struggle to believe, you will help us overcome our unbelief. In Jesus name, Amen.

[Ministry idea: Have you ever said 'yes' to God and accepted His gift of a right standing with Him? Consider prayer a prayer that transfers your trust out of your hands and places it into Christ's hands. And if you've already done so, is there anyone in your life with whom you can share this message?]