

Wasted Faith Discussion Guide

Chapter 1 A Very Real Concern

Warm-up Question: Growing up in your home, was it more important to “do” certain things or to “believe” certain things? What was good or bad about that? Also, was there anyone in your family with whom you talked deeply about the issues of life? Explain and illustrate.

1. Read the introduction to this discussion guide aloud.
2. Read Matthew 7:13-14 and Matthew 7:21-23 aloud. In both of these passages, the word “many” is emphasized. Carefully note the destiny of the group of people to whom that word refers in both cases. Considering Jesus’ words in light of all the churches and denominations that exist, which of the following would you say is a true statement?
 - (a) Most people who profess to know Christ are true Christians.
 - (b) Most people who profess to be Christians are deceived.

Please explain your answer.

Should Jesus’ words create fear among those who profess to know Him? Why or why not?

3. Read aloud the first chapter of **Wasted Faith** (pp. 7-9).
4. I wrote, “The person with an experience alone to validate his eternal state is in a most serious condition.” What do you think is the meaning of that statement? Do you believe it is true or false? Look at each word in the sentence. Discuss your answer.
5. Read aloud 2 Corinthians 12:20-13:5.
 - Some in the Corinthian church were notorious sinners, as is revealed in the earlier portions of the book. In chapter 12, verse 20, Paul lists some of their notable sins. Read this verse aloud again, noting the specific types of sins mentioned.
 - What are some of the notable sins within your church or organization (acknowledging the fact that not *everyone* participates in them—no names or specific incidents please)?
 - Read verse 21. Note that some in the Corinthian church had not yet repented of their impurity, immorality, and sensuality. What should be said about a professing Christian’s actual condition before God if he has been confronted with sin yet will not repent of it? (Read Matthew 18:15-17).

- Read 2 Corinthians 13:5 again. Though your views may change as you study, what, in your present opinion, are some of the aspects of “the test” that reveal whether or not a person is a true Christian?

6. Was there a time in your life that you have thought of as your “conversion to Christ”? Please tell us about this time using the following helps:

- What was my life like before my conversion?
- How did the Holy Spirit draw me to Christ?
- As far as I can tell, what was the actual turning point in my life?
- What differences have I noticed in my life since that time?

If you cannot describe such a time, please relate to the group some of the specific persons and events that have helped you develop an interest in religious things. Please give the details. In other words, tell us about your spiritual journey so far.

Take 5 to 10 minutes each for this question. Two guidelines apply:

- Please be totally honest.
- Please look into the eyes of the one doing the talking.
- Ask questions to help others tell their story more clearly.

[Leader: Unless the group is five or less in number, subdivide into smaller groups. If there are two groups only, you might consider separating into other rooms. Three or more groups in the same space is usually less of a problem for overhearing. Remember that a group of four people will take 20-30 minutes to complete this.]

7. As we have seen already, the Bible makes clear the fact that many who profess to know Christ are headed for destruction. Even if you presently consider yourself a Christian, are you willing to commit before this group (or your mentor) to honestly and openly examine the issue of your salvation through this study?

8. Depending on the time remaining, read chapter 2 in **Wasted Faith**, “Faith Without the Spirit” (pp. 11-15) which will be discussed next week.

9. Conclude with a sincere time of prayer, asking God to help you to be willing to examine your faith.

Before the next meeting: Read chapter 2 in **Wasted Faith**, “Faith Without the Spirit,” on your own (pp. 11-15).

Copyright © 2005 Jim Elliff.
Permission granted for electronic reproduction in exact form.
All other uses require written permission.

www.CCWtoday.org