

Wasted Faith Discussion Guide

Chapter 3

Faith Without Christ

1. Who is the most famous person you have ever met (besides Jesus)? Would you say that you *know* that person? Why or why not?

2. Read chapter 3 in **Wasted Faith** aloud: “Faith Without Christ,” (pp. 17-21).

3. Read Matthew 7:21-23 aloud. Many people believe they will be safe when they stand before God. The religious people Jesus describes in this passage seem shocked to hear His condemnation. They offer three reasons why Jesus should accept them.

a. Try to name at least six reasons people in our culture might use to appeal to Christ at the Judgment.

b. Looking carefully at this passage, what specifically can be learned about *knowing* Christ?

4. Read 1 Samuel 3:1-12 aloud. Surprisingly, this is the Bible’s only description of a child being converted. Though he went to Eli when he was very young (perhaps 3 or 4 years old), several years passed before the experience you just read about (see 1 Samuel 2:18-21 and verse 26 for these events.). Samuel was likely between 11 and 15 years old when he was converted.

a. Re-read verse 7 and then read verse 21. What had to happen before Samuel could know the Lord? Explain your answer.

b. Do you believe that it is right to try to serve God even if you don’t know Him? If so, in what ways? (see 1 Sam. 3:1).

5. Re-read the paragraph in chapter 3 of **Wasted Faith** that begins with the words, “The principal way Christ reveals Himself is through His Word.” After reading, discuss together what this paragraph means. Do you understand what I’m attempting to communicate here? Perhaps some in the group can relate their own experience with God’s communication of Himself through the Bible, either heard or read.

6. I once viewed a movie while on an airplane returning from Europe. The main character caused me to become very emotional. In fact, I entered the bathroom and wept profusely. However, I had never met the person or the actress who portrayed her. How do you differentiate between mere emotion and knowing Christ?

7. Read John 10:1-30, a long passage, aloud. As you read, note three words that appear several times in the text. They are the following: “know,” “hear” (or “listen”), and “follow.” You may wish to circle these words in the text as you read. Remember that in Israel, a sheepfold was a rock wall enclosure where sheep belonging to various shepherds were kept overnight. A doorkeeper would lie across the opening.

a. What does Jesus mean when He says that His sheep will not follow the voice of a stranger? (see verse 5).

b. When does a person become one of Christ’s sheep? Think carefully, considering verses 16 and 26.

c. What four things does Jesus say will be true of every one of His sheep? (see verses 14 and 27). Discuss the meaning of each.

8. Read John 17:1-3 aloud. If these were the only verses you could use to explain to someone what it means to possess eternal life, what would you say?

9. It is obvious that when the gospel is presented, some people understand it and others don’t. This is often seen in Jesus’ encounters with the Pharisees. Read John 8:43-47 aloud. What are the reasons some people cannot understand the truth? Whose fault is that?

10. If you find that you do not actually “know” Christ, what should you do? Read and discuss James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:23-25, and Romans 10:14-17.

11. If you have some time remaining, read chapter 4 in **Wasted Faith**, “Faith Without Reason” (pp. 23-25). End your time with prayer.

Before the next meeting: Read chapter 4 in **Wasted Faith**, “Faith Without Reason” (pp. 23-25).