SMALL GROUP

BIBLE DISCUSSION

TOPIC: STEPS OF FAITH

FOR THE WEEK OF

JANUARY 19, 2014

Lesson in a Line: Let us allow our faith in God to grow until our trust in Him is complete.

Points to Make:

- Let us consider what lies beyond simple faith and belief in God – the stepping-stones of faith.
- In 1 Corinthians 7, the apostle Paul spoke about issues that were critically important for the church to understand, but did not seem to have clear biblical answers. He thus spoke out of his own Spirit-led understanding and also spoke the Word he had received from the Lord. That is the basis of this lesson.
- Jesus spoke to His disciples in Mark 11:22 and made a very simple statement to them: "Have faith in God." This concept was reiterated to the man who brought his son to Him to have a devil cast out (Mark. 11:19-23).
- We need to progress beyond simple Faith in God to the place of Knowledge. Knowledge is the stage where we have absolutely no doubt of the fact that God IS!
- Job exemplified this as he was going through his trials; he stated:
  For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another…. (Job 19:25-27a KJV).
- Through our learning and our experiences, we *know*. These are things we don't need to prove to ourselves through science or philosophy
- I *know* that God is real. I *know* He hears me when I pray. I *know* all power is in His hands. I *know* He will never leave me nor forsake me. I *know* He does all things well. I *know* my times are in His hands.
- I have learned these things. I have experienced these things. I *know* these things.
- Then beyond Knowledge is Hope. Because of what I know, I can have hope that the Lord will act on my behalf in my situation.
- The writers of Psalm2 42 & 43 – (the sons of Korah), put special emphasis on Hope. They spoke of people that ridiculed their belief in God, and of their own feeling that He had abandoned and rejected them.
- Although it was clear that everything was going wrong, they still returned to their refrain, their chorus, three times: Why art thou cast down O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God. (Psalm 42:11 KJV; see also 42:5; 43:5)

Key Scriptures:
Hebrews 11:1-2, 13, 32-40

- We *believe* there is a God. We *know* there is a God. And we have placed all our *hope* in Him that He will take care of that which concerns us.
- But what happens if He doesn't answer our prayers in the way we have asked? What happens when all the scriptures we have memorized and quoted about God answering prayer don't seem to be working, and our situation is getting worse?
- This is when we move from Hope in God to Trust in God. I would propose that Trust is the highest level of faith.
- Trust says: "I may never see the answer to MY fervent prayer, but I absolutely trust that God is doing what is best for His kingdom and His purposes through me. At the end of the day, it is His will that must be done, even at the expense of my own will."
- Many Christians make these statements as a matter of course, without thinking through the implications of what they're really saying to God!
- Do we readily accept the fact that our utter reliance on Him vs. our power for independent action is key to His willingness to work with us?
- Let us progress in our understanding and our prayer to the point where we trust God completely to do what He deems best in our situations. The place where He can reveal His will to us, vs. us telling Him what to do with us.

Discussion Tools

- How can we move from faith to hope, then trust in God?
- Why is it sometimes difficult to practice selfless, fervent prayer for God's will instead of our own?
- Discuss the knowledge of God that especially helps you get through difficult situations.

PRAYER TIME

Lord, let me thrive on knowledge of You and my faith, hope and trust in You.

Ice-breaker: What has life experience taught you, of which no one can convince you otherwise?

NOTES