



October 8th, 2017 Discussion Guide

"Who Needs God: Maybe You Do" Matthew 16:13-17

Introduction

We all want to be masters of our own destinies. We all want to feel in control of our lives. The idea of autonomy is attractive. It makes life feel ordered and predictable. But our desire for autonomy can stand in the way of faith. One of the biggest barriers to belief in God or following him consistently and faithfully is that we don't want to need anyone. But what if autonomy is an illusion?

Discussion Questions

1. Talk about a time when you were absolutely convinced you were right about something, maybe you were debating someone, but discovered halfway through the debate that you were wrong. How difficult was it for you to change your mind and eventually say, "I am wrong." Why is that hard?
2. According to remarks made on Sunday, if God exists, that means we are guilty of sin, accountable to God, and wrong about any conclusion that contradicts his. Do any of those three realities ever hold you back in your relationship with God, or block you away from him altogether?
3. In what ways do you see God holding you accountable to things in your life? Do you find any of those areas of accountability to be tough for you, or do you resist that accountability? If you do resist, how does that impact your life with God?
4. Read Romans 5:6-8. What do these verses say about God's character? How hard is it to sacrifice something for someone who doesn't seem to care for you? Have you ever had to do that? It was said that a loving relationship always requires sacrifice. Do you feel there are sacrifices you make according to your love for Christ? Or if you don't follow Christ, do you see what sacrifices might be required if you embraced his sacrifice for you?
5. Read Matthew 16:13-17 Who do you say that Jesus is? What is it, what line of thinking is it that has led you to that conclusion? Or maybe it was something other than a line of thinking – maybe it was an event or experience or something someone shared with you. [And if you don't yet believe Jesus is the Son of God, it is safe to say that in your group.]



6. If you are a follower of Christ, and probably most people reading this are, what do you say in response to someone who questions all the facets of your faith – your faith in an intangible God, your reliance on prayer, your trust in an ancient book, and so on? Does it tend to make you angry? What is your demeanor as you respond?

Moving Forward:

Don't let the illusion of autonomy [self-rule] stand in the way of a relationship with your heavenly Father. Don't be turned away from God by the prospect that his existence means you're guilty of sin, accountable to him in all ways, and wrong in conclusions that differ from his. Acknowledging your sin and reaching out to God doesn't lead to condemnation from God. It opens the door to forgiveness, relationship, and truth.

James 4:8 & 10

⁸ Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners and purify your hearts you double minded. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and he will exalt you.