

DISCOVER:
Questioning Your Way to Faith

Chapter 1: What Is the Gospel?

Digging Deeper:

1. What does the author mean by saying, “The gospel is not a good idea?” What are some ways we can reduce the gospel to being just that?
2. Based on this chapter, how would you describe the gospel in one or two sentences to a friend who asked?
3. What are some common ways you’ve heard others misunderstand the gospel?
4. What are the four “chapters” of salvation and how does that help Christians make sense of the world and the future?

Chapter 2: Can I Be Sure of My Salvation?

Digging Deeper:

1. What are some reasons you think someone might be unsure whether they have genuine faith or not?
2. Have you ever been invited to “count the cost” of being a Christian? What do you think that means?
3. How much faith do you think is necessary before you can be sure of your salvation?
4. If you’re still unsure about your salvation, write a prayer below asking for God’s help to find peace, and write down the name of someone who you can talk with about your uncertainty.

Chapter 3: Can I Trust and Understand the Bible?

Digging Deeper:

1. What are some reasons people question the trustworthiness of the Bible?
2. What did you learn about biblical archaeology? How does this affect your view of the Bible’s reliability?
3. How would you summarize the way the early Church discerned which books to include in the Bible?

4. What do we lose when we lose the trustworthiness of Scripture? How would that affect the way you think about God, yourself, and life?

Chapter 4: What Is the Trinity?

Digging Deeper:

1. If believing in the Trinity is necessary to be a Christian, why do you think we talk about it so infrequently?
2. How does “equal, distinct, united” help you make sense of the relationships between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
3. Did you hear these or other analogies of the Trinity when you were growing up? Discuss these and other illustrations you may have heard, and highlight where the analogies are helpful and where they break down.
4. Practice drawing the “shield of the trinity” diagram in the space below, explaining each part along the way.



Chapter 5: Is It Okay to Doubt?

Digging Deeper:

1. What are some reasons people are hesitant to share their doubts with one another?
2. What's the difference between “believing doubt” and “unbelieving doubt”?
3. Very few doubts are purely intellectual doubts. What are some ways you can see them flowing from both your head and your heart?
4. What would change for you if you really trusted that Jesus's response to doubters is one of grace and patience?

Chapter 6: How Can a Loving God Send Anyone to Hell?

Digging Deeper:

1. Why do you think hell is an embarrassing doctrine for many Christians to talk about?
2. How does the metaphor about the Mona Lisa help you understand the nature of sin and why God cannot simply overlook it?
3. How does God's judgment show his love and compassion for those who have suffered injustice?
4. Skeptics of the idea of hell call for a God of love and mercy, and we have one! How is the gospel evidence that God takes both sin and mercy seriously?

Chapter 7: Why Did Jesus Need to Die?

Digging Deeper:

1. How would your faith be affected if you found out that Jesus never actually died?
2. The Old Testament is marked by animal sacrifice as the pathway to forgiveness; how is that a foreshadowing of what was fulfilled through the cross?
3. Penal substitutionary atonement is a really weird phrase, but it's an important one to understand what happened on the cross. How would you describe it to a friend?
4. When Jesus died, he atoned for all sin in that moment – past, present, future. How does it strengthen you to live with greater peace and freedom to realize that even your future sins have already been atoned for and forgiven?

Chapter 8: How Do We Know Jesus Rose from the Grave?

Digging Deeper:

1. How would your faith change if you found out that Jesus never rose from the grave?
2. How would you summarize this chapter's claims about the importance of the resurrection?
3. What stands out to you from the evidence of Jesus's resurrection?
4. Why does the historic truth of the resurrection help Christians live with hope and optimism?

Chapter 9: Will Jesus Really Return?

Digging Deeper:

1. Do conversations about the end times fill you with hope or fear? Why?

2. What are some beliefs about the end times that all Christians agree on? Put them in your own words.
3. This chapter claims, “the gospel is secure and fulfilled, but not yet complete.” What does this mean and how is it connected to the end times?
4. Read Revelation 21-22. How do these chapters give you a clearer picture of what awaits Christians in glory?

Chapter 10: Who (Not What) Is the Holy Spirit?

Digging Deeper:

1. Do you think about the Holy Spirit as being equal with God the Father and with Jesus, or as less important? Why?
2. Why is it essential for us to call the Holy Spirit “him,” not “it”?
3. How does the section on “Walking in Step with the Spirit” help you better understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit?
4. What’s going on in your life right now where you could use the Holy Spirit’s help to walk by faith?

Chapter 11: Why Is the Church Important?

Digging Deeper:

1. How old do you think kids should be when they’re expected to participate in your church’s worship service? Why?
2. Why is it important for your spiritual maturity to participate in the church, not just in youth group?
3. What’s one way you could serve others in your church?
4. Share about one person who’s at least ten years older than you who’s had an impact on your life.

Chapter 12: How Do Christians Interpret the Old Testament?

Digging Deeper:

1. Do you tend to read the Old or New Testament more often? Is there a reason why?
2. What are the four chapters of Salvation History? How would you put the whole-Bible story in your own words?
3. What’s the difference between the law and gospel?

4. How do the different types and functions of the Law help you know how to read the Old Testament better?

Chapter 13: Should Christians Be Tolerant?

Digging Deeper:

1. Why do Christians have a reputation for being intolerant?
2. What do you think about this chapter's definition of tolerance: "Tolerance means respect despite disagreement"?
3. How do the biblical examples above shape what Christian tolerance should look like?
4. What's the hardest part of the "Rules of Engagement" for you?

Chapter 14: What Does the Bible Teach about Sex and Dating?

Digging Deeper:

1. What are some of the differences between the ways you hear Christians talk about sex versus the ways you hear non-Christians talk about it?
2. How do people use sex as a shortcut for intimacy?
3. Put into your own words what this chapter says about sexual intimacy as a reflection of our relationship with God.
4. How does a biblical foundation for sexual intimacy and marriage affect the way you approach dating and relationships now?

Chapter 15: What Does the Bible Teach about LGBTQ+ Issues?

Digging Deeper:

1. How would you put what the Bible teaches about homosexuality into your own words?
2. This chapter claims, "A transgender identity isn't necessarily about sexuality, but about what it means to be human." Do you agree or disagree, and why?
3. How does adultery theologically represent atheism?
4. How would you respond to someone who says all sins are the same, so Christians should stop worrying about gender and sexuality?

Chapter 16: Can Christians Believe in Evolution?

Digging Deeper:

1. Why do you think Christianity has a reputation for being anti-science?
2. Which of the Christian viewpoints on creation seems most convincing to you? Why?
3. Why is it important for Christians to affirm that God actually created Adam and Eve, rather than allowing for evolution as the process that eventually led to our first ancestors?
4. How do the essentials of Christian creationism help you know what to emphasize in conversations with others?

Chapter 17: How Should Christians Think about Mental Health Struggles?

Digging Deeper:

1. Why do you think some Christians have a hard time talking about mental health?
2. How do verses like Psalm 43:3 and 1 Kings 19 (both referenced above) comfort you in knowing that even biblical heroes faced mental health struggles?
3. How can the gospel give you hope when you're facing a mental health struggle?
4. Why is it important to talk with someone about your struggles with mental health?

Chapter 18: Does Committing Suicide Condemn You to Hell?

Digging Deeper:

1. Does the Bible teach suicide is the unforgivable sin?
2. How do you decide when to tell someone else about a friend's suicidal comments?
3. Some people might view the gospel as an escape hatch from life's struggles. How is this a significant misunderstanding of what the gospel is all about?
4. Why should Christians continue to endure through hardship rather than see suicide as an escape from life's struggles?

Chapter 19: Why Pray if God Will Do What He Wants?

Digging Deeper:

1. Why might people doubt the value of prayer because of God's sovereignty?
2. This chapter argues that God's sovereignty is actually the reason we can pray with confidence. How would you explain this in your own words?

3. When you pray with confidence or uncertainty about whether or not God is actually listening and responsive?
4. How does CAST help you think differently about prayer? Which of these do you already practice most often? Which do you practice least often?

Chapter 20: Why Does God Allow Suffering?

Digging Deeper:

1. What are some ways you've learned and grown as a result of challenges and suffering in your life?
2. If it were up to you, how much suffering do you think God should allow?
3. What does this chapter mean by calling the crucifixion of Jesus the greatest act of evil in human history?
4. How can the death, resurrection, and eventual return of Jesus Christ give you hope and endurance when you suffer?