

Small Group Guide: Faith Seeking Understanding

Based on John 5 - "The Word Sent Into the World"

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to guide your discussion and help group members move from faith to deeper understanding and conviction.

Icebreaker Question

Share about a time when you believed something before you fully understood it. How did your understanding grow over time?

Key Takeaways

1. **Faith precedes understanding** - We don't need perfect understanding to be saved, but understanding deepens our faith into conviction.
2. **The Pharisees' problem wasn't ignorance** - They understood exactly who Jesus claimed to be; they simply refused to believe it.
3. **Jesus fulfills Old Testament promises** - His miracles (healing the blind, deaf, lame, leprosy) proved He could restore Israel, but they had to repent and believe.
4. **Scripture points to Christ** - The Bible isn't a checklist for earning eternal life; it's a tutor leading us to Jesus.
5. **Understanding produces conviction** - Deep biblical knowledge helps us stand firm when facing opposition, persecution, or cultural pressure.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Read John 5:16-24.** What specific claims does Jesus make about His relationship with the Father? Why would these claims be considered blasphemous by the Jewish leaders?

2. Dr. David Klingler mentioned that Israel had "understanding that should lead to faith" while Gentiles have "faith seeking understanding." What's the difference? Which category do you fall into?
3. **Read John 5:39-40.** How is it possible to study Scripture and still miss eternal life? What does this warn us about today?

Personal Reflection

4. The sermon mentioned we often care too much about what people think. In what areas of your life are you most tempted to "seek glory from one another" rather than from God?
5. Share your salvation story. How much did you understand about theology when you first believed? How has your understanding grown since then?
6. The pastor said, "Understanding turns into conviction." Can you think of a biblical truth that you've come to understand more deeply that has changed how you live?

Application

7. **The Fear Factor:** The sermon referenced Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Daniel, and Stephen—people who refused to compromise despite threats. What are you most afraid of losing if you stand firm in your faith? (Reputation? Relationships? Career opportunities? Social acceptance?)
8. **Read 1 Peter 3:15.** How does being "prepared to give an answer" require moving from simple faith to deeper understanding? What areas of your faith do you need to study more to be better prepared?
9. The pastor asked, "Why are we watering down the truth, trying not to offend anyone?" Have you ever compromised biblical truth to avoid conflict? What would help you speak truth with both conviction and love?

Group Prayer Focus

- **Pray for understanding:** Ask God to deepen your understanding of Scripture so faith becomes unshakeable conviction
- **Pray for courage:** Ask for boldness to speak truth without compromise, even when facing opposition
- **Pray for clarity:** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see Christ throughout all of Scripture

- **Pray for those who know but don't believe:** Pray for family members, friends, or coworkers who understand the gospel intellectually but haven't embraced it by faith

Closing Thought

"We don't study the Bible to be saved. We study the Bible so that we understand because when you understand, you have conviction."

What would change in your life if you lived with the conviction that nothing— not death, not persecution, not rejection— could threaten what God has secured for you in Christ?