

When Everything's On Fire Discussion Questions

There are more questions in this guide than we will have space for on our discussion night. Use them as a guide for your deepening thoughts as you navigate the book.

Pre-amble Questions

1. Overall impressions of the book (rate 1-10)?
2. What were some of the things you most appreciated? Feel free to share a quote.
3. What was something you struggled or disagreed with? Feel free to share a quote.

Chapter 1

4. How do you answer the madman's poignant question "What after all are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?" Is that true, or does the church still have a future as a living witness to a risen Christ?
5. Considering Dostoevsky's quote, "I believe in Christ and confess him not like some child; my hosanna has passed through an enormous furnace of doubt." Is some level of suffering inherent to a mature Christianity?

Chapter 2

6. Do you agree with Zahnd's assertion that, "When fundamentalism is the dominant paradigm, it's all too easy to suddenly careen from Christian fundamentalism to atheistic fundamentalism. Sometimes biblical literalism and angry atheism are just two sides of the same fundamentalist coin," on page 27? Why or why not?

Chapter 3

7. How would you suggest we discern the precious parts of Christianity worth saving from those which are able to be removed for renovation?

Chapter 4

8. What part of the "Hard-won advice" (pg 54-58) stood out to you most for a healthy process of renovating the theological house and why? How would you encourage someone to embrace that piece of advice or even apply it in your own spiritual journey?

Chapter 5

9. Was the distinction between Jesus, the church and Christianity helpful for you? How can we better communicate to the world watching the

distinctions? How might we better communicate the distinctions within christianity itself?

Chapter 6

10. On pages 80-81 Zahnd makes a quick comment about certainty, certitude and infallibility. Do you think that certainty is antithetical to a mature faith? Why or why not?

Chapter 7

11. On 97 Zahnd states, "This is how I come to accept the Bible as authoritative, but it's a three-step process: First Jesus, then church, and finally Bible. To begin with the Bible and make that the foundation of faith (instead of Jesus!) is to put more weight on the Bible than the Bible can bear. Let me give just one example." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Do you see any flaws in his argument?

Chapter 8

12. Have you had church environments that helped facilitate experience beyond objectivity? Was it helpful?
13. Are head and heart entirely separate experiences as Zahnd seems to allude through this chapter?

Chapter 9

14. How do we hold proper balance between openness to experience/mysticism without landing in "religious fanaticism" or stifling the spirit by being overly cautious?

Chapter 10

15. Would you add any caveats or cautions to Zahnd's way to read the bible?
16. Can the second naïveté way of reading the Bible be inherited as a starting point or must one go through other methods first? In his described progression?

Chapter 11

17. Which of Zahnd's dreams resonated with you most? Which did you have the most issue with? Which one would you pick to prioritize if you could? Which would be hardest to implement in the current church culture as you see it?