

Message Discussion Guide

FAITH RISKS

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

September 27, 2009

James 2:25-26

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to share about the greatest risk they've ever taken. Encourage learners to share briefly about this risk. Ask: Why was this action such a risk?

Explain that today we will look at the greatest risk in Rahab's life and how it was fruit of her faith in God.

Option 2

Ask learners the following questions:

What did you risk when you became a Christ-follower?

What is the risk for you living out the life of a Christ-follower?

Explain that today we will look at how Rahab risked everything to follow God in a radical way.

Review the Message . . .

Radical Rahab...

- She was a recipient of scandalous grace.
- She feared and revered the sovereign God.
- She risked it all for the spread of His glory.

Discussion

- Explain that when the Israelites were entering the Promised Land, they had to conquer the current residents in the land. One of the most memorable battles was that of Jericho, and a woman named Rahab played a large role in the story.
- Enlist one or more learners to read Joshua 2. What about this story seems shocking or unbelievable?
- Invite learners to describe Rahab's belief in God as she expressed it to the spies of Israel in Joshua 2:9-11. What did her description of God indicate about her knowledge of Him?

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- Explain that Rahab's involvement in hiding the spies in this way would have certainly cost her life if she had been caught. What does her willingness to risk her life for God indicate about her belief in Him? Was Rahab's belief in God one of purely intellectual knowledge or of a deeper belief?
- Enlist a learner to read James 2:25-26. How does James confirm Rahab's justifying belief in God? What was the evidence of her faith in Him?
- By risking her life for her belief in the true God, what was the result for the nation of Israel, and the spread of the name of God?

Application . . .

- How do we often seem to communicate that some people are more deserving of grace than others?
- Why is the offer of God's grace to everyone shocking to us? How can we avoid seeing ourselves as deserving?
- How do our actions communicate the fear and reverence we have for God?
- If we truly believe that God is the one true God and has offered His grace to us, how should our lives reflect that belief?
- What are we willing to risk for the sake of God's glory?
- What is more important to us than God's glory?

Summation of Justification...

- Three realities...
 - Christ is the basis of our justification.
 - Faith is the means of our justification.
 - Works are the evidence of our justification.
- Two reminders...
 - All three of these realities are only possible by the grace of God.
 - All three of these realities are ultimately involved in judgment before God.

Discussion

- Enlist a learner to read 2 Corinthians 5:21. How does a person become righteous? Can a person do anything by his or her own decision to earn righteousness?
- If Jesus is the only means of becoming righteous, could there be any other basis for justification?
- How is faith different from intellectual knowledge?
- When a person has faith for salvation, in what or whom is the person placing trust?
- What is the relationship between works and justification?
- Read Ephesians 2:8. How is justification possible?
- Enlist a learner to read Romans 2:3-9. Is God's judgment certain?
- What is the basis of God's judgment? What role does works play in God's judgment?

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Application . . .

- When explaining why we have been justified before God, how big of a role does the word “I” play in our explanation? What does speaking in terms of self-justification indicate about our belief in Christ’s sacrifice?
- How does our faith in Christ demonstrate our inability to earn salvation?
- What do our works indicate about our relationship with Christ?
- Where do we / should we place the confidence of our salvation?
- How might we justify a lack of fruit in our lives in an effort to downplay its importance?
- Why do we live as if the fruit of our justification, or works, is not a part of being a follower of Christ—often in the name of spiritual freedom?