

# SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

## What Is True Spirituality?

Questions written by Mark Collins

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Small Group Announcement** - “Right now, some people in your life are far away from God. What if you took the risk to pull together an informal, non-threatening gathering at a coffee shop where seeking friends could raise their questions about Christianity?”

Join us on March 8<sup>th</sup> as Garry Poole, from Willow Creek Community Church, one of America largest churches, equips us to reach our city with the love of Jesus Christ in a revolutionary way.”

Garry has been Willow Creek’s key evangelism leader since 1992, and is widely recognized as the nation’s leading innovator in reaching spiritual seekers through informal discussion forums. Passionate about impacting people for Christ, Garry and his team have trained thousands of facilitators to effectively assemble gatherings for spiritual seekers to explore biblical truths in their own settings. His award-winning book, *Seeker Small Groups*, provides a detailed blueprint for engaging spiritual seekers in life-changing conversations. Garry is also the author of *The Complete Book of Questions*, primary author of the *Tough Questions* series, and co-author of *Experiencing the Passion of Jesus*.

For more information contact Keith Twigg at [keith.twigg@therocksandiego.org](mailto:keith.twigg@therocksandiego.org)

## MINISTRY PRAYER REQUESTS

*As “small groupies,” you are the heart and soul of this ministry--who better than you to lift up the Small Group Ministry in prayer? So, it’s up to you, you can spend time in your small group praying for these things (weekly or occasionally), or you can pray during the week on your own time. If you’d like to be added to our Pastor’s Prayer Team, just let us know. Mark Collins, the Small Group Pastor, would love your prayers! We send out a monthly email of his personal and ministry prayer requests. Just contact Andy Rodgers at [andy.rodgers@therocksandiego.org](mailto:andy.rodgers@therocksandiego.org). May God work through your prayers mightily!*

**Reaching the Lost:** Pray that all of our groups participate in our up coming Small Group sign up. Also, in March, the Small group ministry will be training and deploying a new type of small groups called: Coffee Shop Communities (See Small Group Announcement).

**Current Small Group Leaders/Small Groups:** Pray that all of our Small Group take time to follow up on all the new people trying to get into small groups.

**Potential Small Group Leaders:** Pray that our current leaders continue to give their ministry away and develop future leaders to reach their full potential in Jesus.

**Small Group Staff:** Pray that God gives us the favor and wisdom to rebuild the Small Group team. Ask Him to order our steps in every decision we make.

**The Rock Body:** Pray that the Rock Army grows deeper and deeper in the stewardship of their lives in Christ.

## MEMORY VERSE

*Then God said "Let us make man in Our own image, according to Our likeness... Genesis 1:26a*

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – WHAT IS TRUE SPIRITUALITY?

This weekend we had an incredible message on accountability. That started me thinking: What are we supposed to be holding each other accountable to, anyway? I guess what I'm really asking is: What is the nature of true spirituality? We've all been taught the pathways: prayer, bible study, fasting, worship, evangelism, serving, journaling, but these activities are only vehicles to get us to the destination of spirituality, they're not the end in themselves. It's funny; I personally grew up in the church, and have seen countless people come to Christ, but over this same time period while I've seen many people take on the church expectations: attending services, getting involved in ministries, and giving their money, I haven't experienced people day by day, month by month, decade by decade, being transformed in the likeness of Jesus. What's even more shocking is the fact, that few people are even bothered when it doesn't happen. In fact, in most churches nobody is even surprised by this. No one calls an emergency meeting of the board of elders to consider why people aren't changing. Deep down in our soul we know that our hearts need changing but when that doesn't happen or doesn't happen quickly we tend to look for more superficial and visible ways of demonstrating that we're more "spiritual." We might:

- think spiritual maturity is simply how much biblical or theological information we have acquired;
- think we should rigidly immerse ourselves in a host of spiritual disciplines that will prove how spiritual we are;
- find ourselves looking down on people who are not working on their spiritual lives as hard as we are;
- focus solely on outward behaviors, making them the litmus test of godliness, while ignoring deeper—and more destructive sins of the heart.

Despite all the confusing and distorted notions of what it means to be spiritual, the bible speaks with brilliant clarity: "Whoever claims to live in him must walk like Jesus did" (1 John 2:6). Therefore, to pursue a spiritual life means simply this: *To know Jesus more intimately and to live as if he were in your place.* It is to order your life in such a way that you stay connected to Jesus, thinking as he thought, speaking as He spoke, and walking as He walked. Certainly this imitation of Christ will look different for each person, expressing itself through that person's unique temperament and personality. But there is a common denominator. At the core of Jesus' teaching is the command to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love other people as you love yourself (Mark 12:30-31). Regardless of anything else you measure, how you stand up against this statement will reveal your spiritual stature, and is the supreme diagnostic for Christ-followers who want to please Him.

## ***Getting Started***

Think about what it would mean for you to live the ordinary moments of your life as if Jesus were in your place. How would you do each of the following activities in Jesus' name?

- Waking up
- Greeting those you see first in the morning
- Eating
- Driving
- Working outside the home or caring for children while at home
- Shopping
- Watching TV
- Doing household tasks
- Reading the paper
- Going to sleep

## ***Digging Deeper: God isn't interested in your Spiritual life, God is simply interested in your life***

God is inviting you to make each moment of every day a chance to learn from Him to master the art of life. The apostle Paul put it this way: "Whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). In the Bible a person's name reflected their character. So doing something in Jesus name just means to do it in a way consistent with His character.

1. Describe the picture Jesus paints in John 10:10 of what should happen in the life of all who follow Him?
  - a. What has prevented you and other Christians you know from having that quality of life?
  
2. Read Matthew 23:1-28. In this passage Jesus has some harsh words for the religious leaders of His day. What specific behaviors did Jesus confront?
  
3. What heart attitudes do you think all these behaviors have in common?
  
4. As you read through this passage, was there any point at which you said, "Ouch"—I have a tendency to go in this direction?"
  - a. How do you think such distorted views of spirituality have crept in your life?
  
5. In your opinion why is it easy for people to think that acquiring knowledge, following formulas, and obeying rules will automatically lead to true spiritual maturity?

6. According to the following word of Jesus, what must be at the heart of any concept of spirituality?

Matthew 23:11-12

Mark 12: 28-34

John 15:4-17 (hint: look for repeated words or phrases)

### ***Bringing it Home***

Brother Lawrence understood that every moment of a Christ-follower's life is an opportunity to do life in Jesus' name. I love how he put this concept into words:

*What makes you think that God is absent from the maintenance shop but present in the chapel? Holiness doesn't depend on changing our jobs, but in doing for God's sake what we have been used to doing on our own. Seriously—repair equipment for God, answer abusive phone calls for God, concentrate fully on the job you're doing for God. He isn't obsessed with religion—he's the God of the whole of life. But we need to consciously give it to Him. Then whatever we're doing—provided it's not against His will—becomes an act of Christian service.*

7. Being as candid as possible, how would you assess the state of your spiritual life right now?
- a. What work would you invite God to do?
  - b. How can members of your small group help?