

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

“The Real Thing?”

Questions written by Mark Collins

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Small Group Announcements – Aloha Rock Small group leaders! You are cordially invited to join us for a leadership luau on Friday, May 16, 2008 at 6:30pm at the Rock church in room 232. Come enjoy a delicious Hawaiian buffet, hula praise performance, live island music, free giveaways, some advanced leadership training and much more! This is a free event to celebrate your faithful service to the Small Group Ministry at the Rock. Email Danah at danah.davis@therocksandiego.org for more details. Mahalo! (That means thank you!)

Small Group leaders are you encouraging your group members to join the Rock Army? Your group can catch the vision of becoming a part of a movement that encourages people to become World-Class Christians. To join, check out the ARMY requirements at www.therocksandiego.org/army/

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. May God work through your prayers mightily!

Reaching the Lost: Pray that all the small groups continue to develop relationships with those who are far from God, and invite them to their small groups.

Current Small Group Leaders/Small Groups: Pray that all of our Small Groups 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 accountability to one another.

MEMORY VERSE

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith.

Hebrews 11:36-37

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – “THE REAL THING”

Last week I had the pleasure of shopping for my daughter’s eighteenth birthday present. After many discussions with my wife *we* decided that *we* would get Candace a series of gifts (18 in all) to commemorate this important milestone in her life. After I made the commitment, I realized that eighteen gifts could threaten the very balance of our already tight yearly budget, so I quickly moved to negotiate where we would look for her presents. We started out at the mall. I immediately determined, after the first couple of gifts if we stayed on this pace, Candace’s college fund would be in serious jeopardy (especially due to the fact that we had to fill up at the gas station on the way there)! Finally, in a moment of divine inspiration God spoke these words into my mind: “The Kobey’s Swap Meet.” I don’t know if you’ve ever had the pleasure of shopping at an outdoor flea market, but I can truly recommend the experience. This gathering is the greatest example of “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure” principal on this earth. I was fascinated by the heated negotiations that rivaled the intensity of someone you might find on Wall Street. This place had everything, especially if you’re in the market for fakes and knock-offs. Where else in the world can you buy a Prada bag, and Dolce & Gabana sunglasses all for under ten dollars? When I asked one of the vendors where all these knock-offs came from, I was quickly corrected with the proper term, that these goods were not fakes but merely replicas (I guess you can get around branding laws if you call your items replicas rather than advertising them as the real things). What was even more amazing was the fact that most of these products actually looked pretty good. Now I admit that I’m no handbag expert, but these items seemed to be an answer to my fiscal prayers; designer bags at swap meet prices. I had found heaven!

Unfortunately my Shangri-la experience was about to come to a quick end. While I was rummaging through all this treasure, imagining how quickly we were going to fulfill our eighteen gift quest, a young lady came up and began comparing her bag with one of the replicas. It was obvious, even at some distance that her bag, was far superior to those I held in my greedy little arms. In fact, compared to the real thing my goods were cheap and not a worthy of a daughter whom I love so much. There are many in this world who would love to convince you that their explanation for humanity’s inherent need to seek out a higher power, a source for our existence, and the meaning of life better fits the world, than the Bible’s explanation for these truths. One thing’s for sure that this universal quest for meaning outside ourselves is the most important journey a person can undertake. And depending on how you answer it, your life will unfold in radically different directions. If you conclude God doesn’t exist or He is some impersonal force, or the sum of all creation, you’ll undoubtedly avoid seeking a relationship with God of the Bible and will not attempt to honor, serve and obey and submit your life to Him as the Bible commands. The questions remain: “Is there a God?”, “What is He like?”, “Does He care?”, and “How can I know Him?” just to name a few. My hope is that this small group session will help facilitate discussion that inspires every member of your group to take one step closer to discovering the truth about who God is.

Getting Started

Think back when you were a kid. What did you believe about god during those years? Then take some time discussing how your view have changed over the years.

What are some factors that have influenced your current beliefs about God ?

Digging Deeper:

Throughout history there has been many theories suggested about the existence or the person of God:

- The *atheist* says no god or gods exist at all and the universe as we know it happened by chance with no intelligent designer.
- The *agnostic* says it's impossible to ascertain if there is a God, no one can know for sure.
- The *deist* says God created the universe and left it alone to fend for itself. He is uninterested in His creation
- The *theist* says God exists and want to be intimately involved with His creation
- The *polytheist* says many gods exist. A similar view subscribes to the belief that all pathways lead to God.
- The *pantheist* says that God exists in and through everything in the universe and he is one with the universe

1. Which of the views of God listed makes the most sense to you? Why?
 - a. Which of the previous positions about God are the most common belief among the people you know? Which is least popular?
2. What are some arguments do you commonly hear that defend their positions about God? To what extent do these arguments and other factors influence your own thinking about the existence of God?
3. Read Psalm 19:1-4 and Romans 1:19, 2:14-15. What does the complex nature of the universe and the fact the all humans seem to have a conscience say about God existence?
4. Imagine you are conducting a survey asking people what they think God is like? What are the most common characteristics they would mention?
5. The Bible describes God with a variety of pictures, symbols and words. Taken together they form a consistent picture of what God is like. Take some time looking up the following verses and the attributes that show us His nature:
 - a. *Omnipresent*--(Psalm 68:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18). He is always near; no place is further from Him than any other place and he is not limited to spatial dimensions.
 - b. *Omnipotent*—(Psalm 139:6-16). He can do anything that doesn't violate His nature; He's all powerful; nothing is impossible for Him; his power is unlimited nad only restricted by His choice
 - c. *Omniscient*—(Job 37:16; 1 John 3:20). He knows everything; nothing is hidden; nothing goes unnoticed; nothing I beyond his ability to grasp.
 - d. *Sovereign*—(Daniel 4:25; Romans 9:15-23). He is the ultimate ruler of the universe; no one has greater power or authority than Him.
 - e. *Eternal*—(Isaiah 40:28; Colossians 1:15-17). He has always been and will always be. He had no beginning and will have no end; He is creator of time; but not subject to it but rules over time.
 - f. *Immutable*—(Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalms 102:7). He doesn't change; He isn't getting better or worse; His attributes can't diminish; He's perfect for eternity.
 - g. *Infinite*—(1 Kings 8:27; Job 11:7-9). he is unlimited; He can't be measured and he is inexhaustible in every aspect of His being.
 - h. *Holy*—(Habakkuk 1:13). He's pure; He's morally perfect and without fault: He can't sin.
 - i. *Wise*—(James 3:15-18). He uses His knowledge skillfully; His counsel should be trusted.
 - j. *Good*—(Zephaniah 3:17; Romans 11:35). He has no evil' can do no evil. He constantly works for the benefit of His creation; he can be trusted with our well-being.

- k. *Just*—(Romans 2:6; 11:6; Galatians 2:6). He's fair, he doesn't tolerate unrighteousness; He will make sure every wrong will be made right; he's impartial
- l. *Loving*—(Jeremiah 31:3; 1 John 4:7-8). Sacrifice is in His nature; he cares; He gives; He serves; He works to bring about what we need: He compassionate; He's sensitive and we matter to Him.

- 6. Which of the following attributes listed grab your attention more than others? Explain why.
- 7. It's one thing to believe that the God described in the Bible exists, and quite another to let that belief impact your life. What changes would you have to make for God to make a difference in your life?

Bringing it Home

Ask your group to check the statement(s) below that best describes their belief at this point in their lives.

- I'm not sure I believe that the way the Bible describes God is really accurate.
- My concept of God is somewhat different from the god depicted in this session.
- I'm open to thinking about God in new ways.
- I'm still not sure what I believe and don't believe about God.
- The Bible is my supreme source for authoritative information about God
- I know a lot about God but it's not affecting my life the way it should.

As a group ask God to give you wisdom on ways to minister to those who are still process in their belief and understanding about God.