

What Is God Saying? Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part altogether, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. If you could spend a day with any historical figure (outside of individuals in the Bible), whom would you choose?
2. What is one good habit you have in your life?

Read the following passages: John 4:46-54.

From a first-century Jewish perspective, the “certain royal official” in this account was an unlikely candidate for a miracle. Because he was a royal official, he likely worked for Herod Antipas, whom most Galilean Jews did not particularly like. Herod Antipas built the city of Tiberias on a graveyard and forced people to live there. He imprisoned and later beheaded John the Baptist. Jesus even called Herod Antipas a “fox” and refused to answer any of his questions.

Beyond working for Herod Antipas, this royal official may have been involved with the Roman military, and it’s even possible he was a Gentile. Regardless of the particulars, Jewish readers of John’s account would be suspicious of a figure like this royal official. Even so, this royal official shows us how we can grow in faith. He moved from information (about Jesus), to a personal encounter with Jesus, to the risk of leaving Jesus without knowing for sure that his son was healed, to a firm faith in Jesus. In our own lives, each of these elements are important for a genuine faith: information, revelation, risk, and (ultimately) a deep trust in Jesus.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Are you confident that the events recorded in the Gospels are historically reliable, including Jesus’ miracles? Explain. If you are confident that the Gospels are historically reliable, what would you say to someone who takes the view that the stories in the Gospels are fictional?
2. The New Testament talks about “knowing” Jesus (and/or God) and “loving” Jesus (and/or God). These are relational words. Jesus told the Pharisees that he is the good shepherd and that sheep recognize the voice of their shepherd. Practically, how do we recognize when God is speaking to us? What do you think God is saying to you in this season of your life?
3. Because we rarely have certainty in this life, taking steps of faith often feels risky. What are some ways we should “take risks” for God? Can you think of any recent

occasions in which you took a risk for God? Explain.

4. All followers of Jesus experience occasions when we don't receive what we ask from God. What are some reasons we might not receive what we ask for? Can you think of times when your confidence in God has suffered because you seemed not to get a response from God? How should we navigate these moments?
5. We may be prone to not ask for or to not expect anything significant from God because we don't want to be disappointed. Do you think this is how God wants us to live? Explain.
6. What is one thing you can do to grow in faith in this season of your life?

Pray