



DID GOD

REALLY

SAY THAT?

1. "JUST FOLLOW YOUR HEART"

ICEBREAKER



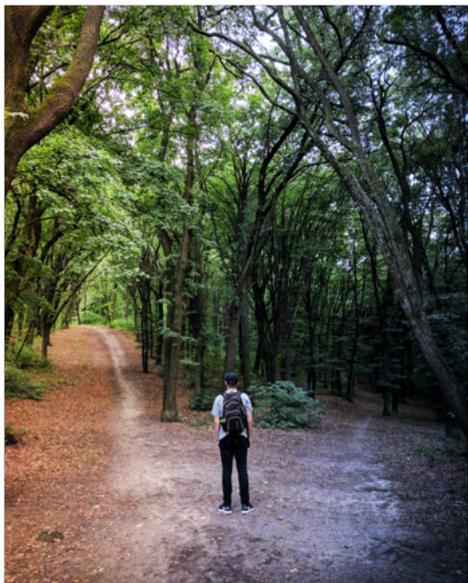
If this is a new group or there are new people, please take a moment to **introduce yourselves**.

To start off your small group, briefly share your response to the following questions:

What's something challenging that you've always wanted to do, but you were too scared to try?

Share with your group.

WHAT TO EXPECT



Let's get a big picture of what we'll be learning today...

Sometimes we believe something that sounds right, but isn't quite right. We need to ask ourselves, "Did God really say that?" All over the world, in the most treacherous of terrains, men and women compete in "Adventure Races." They must run, climb, and swim through tropical climates or over rocky mountains. They have to keep their eyes on the path ahead. Intuition or feeling will get them off track. Much like in life, if we just try to follow only our heart we can get off track. But God is always willing to bring us back on the right path. In today's small group discussion, we'll be learning how to navigate through our life long journey and what to look out for so that we don't fall into the trap of being misled by the thing that is prone to wander--our heart.

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Tip: AVOID TALKING or TEACHING TOO MUCH. Small groups are designed for everyone to share and grow together.

Tip: IN PERSON GATHERING. Per State current requirements, please observe the following if your group decides to meet in person: No more than 10 people at this time. This may change based on what Tier we are currently at in the State of Hawaii; wear a mask; and maintain 6 feet social distance.

ONLINE Tip: ZOOM (ONLINE) GATHERING. If you're meeting together on Zoom, familiarize yourself with the Zoom features on your electronic device. It is helpful for everyone to know where the mute button is located. Ask the attendees to self-mute to avoid environmental noise when someone else is talking & sharing. Doing this will help with the flow of your SG discussion time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.) Life is hard. So, it's important to get on the right path. Sure, you could go down the road that everyone else seems to follow. Or you could put all your attention on the path that God is leading you down. Take a look at how Jesus described these two paths:

"Go in through the narrow gate. The gate to destruction is wide, and the road that leads there is easy to follow. A lot of people go through that gate. But the gate to life is very narrow. The road that leads there is so hard to follow that only a few people find it."

Matthew 7:13-14 (CEV)

Messing up in life is pretty easy. Living a life that's destructive, both to yourself and others, can be a very simple journey. Just follow along with the crowd and ignore God's road signs. But if you want a good life then you need to stay in step with the Lord.

Why do you think Jesus said the "gate to destruction is wide" and the "road that leads there is easy to follow?" What makes going along with the crowd such a bad decision?

2.) What is leading you down the path of your life? Are you listening to the right voice, or are you distracted by the beat of your own heart? We can either chase after God's will or strive for our own desires. It's no secret that this is a problem in the world today. The Bible told us long ago it would happen:

For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. 2 Timothy 4:3 (NLT)

The first thing that happens is we turn away from teaching that is "sound and wholesome." Sound means that it makes sense and it works. It's tried and true! Wholesome means that it has goodness as a goal. It's free from sinfulness.

When we turn from these types of teachings, we do it because we want to hear something that our "itching ears" like. What's that mean? Those are things that sound really good, even if they don't really work.

**What are some examples of things that sound good but really aren't?
(Example, "Just do whatever feels good," or "If it doesn't hurt anyone, it's fine," or "Go with the flow.")**

3.) Following your heart seems like a sure bet. After all, if it feels good it must be good. So, how can this idea turn so bad? Take a look at what the prophet Jeremiah said:

The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?
Jeremiah 17:9 (NLT)

And then read how Jesus described the heart:

"For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. These are what defile you."
Matthew 15:19-20 (NLT)

Our hearts aren't the best guide when it comes to living right. That's because our hearts, due to our sin nature, want to do things that are selfish and self-serving. Instead, we need a new heart given to us by God.

Can you think of a time when someone did something selfish that affected you? They might have even thought it was for your good but it wasn't.

4.) When we just follow our heart, we end up more tolerant of sin. Not only our own, but others as well. We think that as long as it feels good or if it doesn't hurt anyone else, then it's fine. But God's glorious standard is not something we can just ignore.

"If you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven."

Matthew 5:19 (NLT)

What are some things that people think are no big deal but are actually harmful to themselves and others? (Example, pornography, gossip, envy)

5.) To make your path straight, have God look deep into your heart and correct what is wrong. Long ago, David wrote this as part of a song to God:

Examine me, O God, and know my mind. Test me, and know my thoughts. See whether I am on an evil path. Then lead me on the everlasting path.

Psalm 139:23-24 (GWT)

The steps seem pretty simple, even if they are hard to follow:

- 1) Ask God to examine your life
- 2) Confess where you have made a mistake
- 3) Make amends if you need to
- 4) Commit to get back on the right path

**Why do you think we are slow to confess our sins and correct our lives?
(Example: We feel ashamed, pride, fear of confronting our sins)**

WHAT WILL YOU DO?



This week, chances are you'll get off track in some way. It won't help anything to "just follow your heart" to get back on track. You'll need to:

- Ask God to point out your sins,
- Ask God for forgiveness, and
- Ask God to lead you back on the right path.

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Do at least one (1) SOAP Devotions this week
- Share with your group one of your SOAP Devotions from this past week
- Invite a friend to join this small group next week

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Take a few minutes to close your time together with prayer and to pray for each other's prayer requests. Below is a sample prayer to read if you choose to. You can also choose to write down each other's prayer requests to remember throughout the week.



Sample Prayer:

"Dear Father, thank You for the new heart You put in each of us that is aligned with You instead of our own selfish one. We also thank You for the Holy Spirit who teaches us all things and brings comfort to us when we're struggling in life. It's so easy to get off track because our heart is prone to wander away from Your presence. Would You help us walk with the Holy Spirit each day to stay on the right path? Help us to not lean on our own understanding and our feelings. Instead, remind us to always go back to Your word and what it says. Let Your word direct our heart, our mind and our emotions. We give You permission to do whatever it takes to recalibrate and redirect us back in the right direction. In Jesus' name we humbly pray, amen."

Group Prayer Requests:

Name

Request

DURING THE WEEK

Find Time To Read God's Word



The Power of Feeding on God's Word Daily

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

As we read God's word, we begin to see how God responds to things. Doing daily devotions re-patterns the way we think and transforms the spirit of the mind. Then, when we face similar situations as Jesus did, we begin to respond in the same way.

Doing devotions is an excellent way to record, process, and share what God is speaking to you. It's also a useful tool to use at a later time to reflect on and review some of the "gems" that you have received. Without writing these down, you may forget God's promises and some very important life lessons! While doing devotions is a very personal time with the Lord, you may want to share some of your daily devotions with your family, friends, co-workers, or small group. Through discussion, you may be able to look deeper into what God is speaking to you, gain new insights, and even encourage others.

Sample Devotion

SCRIPTURE

"If you do not carry your own cross and follow Me, you cannot be My disciple."
(Luke 14:27)

OBSERVATION

Self-sacrifice is a prerequisite for discipleship. Self-centeredness has no place in the life of a Jesus follower.

APPLICATION

It can be hard to focus less on self and more on Jesus, but when we do we are living out the very commands of Jesus.

PRAYER

God, help me to live a selfless life by always focusing on what You want instead of what makes me happy, comfortable, and content. In Jesus' name, Amen.

SCRIPTURE...

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.

Romans 8:5 (NLT)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Colossians 3:1-2 (CSB)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26 (NIV)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD. They will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with all their heart.

Jeremiah 24:7 (NIV)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...

SCRIPTURE...

O Lord, You have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You know what I am going to say even before I say it, Lord. You go before me and follow me. You place Your hand of blessing on my head. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand!

Psalm 139:1-2, 4-6 (NLT)

OBSERVATION...

APPLICATION...

PRAYER...
