

This midweek study will explore the doctrine of faith. Use the following main points, Scriptures, teaching/discussion ideas, and questions to help students gain a better understanding of the essential doctrine for this session.

Essential Doctrine: Faith

Biblical faith is the resting, or trusting, in Christ alone for salvation (John 3:16-21). More than being simply a mental agreement of historical facts, genuine faith begins with a recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel (1 John 4:13-16), followed by a receiving of Christ as Lord and Savior of one's life (John 1:10-13). Biblical faith is not blind faith, for it rests on the historical life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

1 Biblical faith is the resting, or trusting, in Christ alone for salvation (John 3:16-21).

Invite students to discuss why trust is essential for any good, growing relationship.

- ▶ *Why is it important that Jesus requires trust from us? Why not simply have believers confess Jesus as Christ?*

Read John 3:16-21.

- ▶ *How did Jesus confessing His love for the world invite us to trust Him for salvation?*

Jesus said His plan for the world is not to condemn it, but to save it through the power of the gospel.

- ▶ *Jesus said He didn't come to the world to condemn. How does this cause us to rest in Christ?*
- ▶ *In what ways has Jesus taken the initiative in loving us first? Why should this cause us to love Christ more deeply?*

2 Genuine faith begins with a recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel (1 John 4:13-16).

Option: Bring a box into the group and show it to students.

Invite three students to participate. Tell the three volunteers that there are very strange and good objects in the box. Before they reach in, they have to confess that while the leader is good and would never do anything to hurt them, they have to bring out whatever they find. Place something unique in the box, such as an iTunes card or a five-dollar bill, as a reward for their trust.

Tell them that, like the confession the student had to make about your goodness, believers in Christ have to confess and recognize the truth of the gospel to receive in faith what Christ has for us. Sometimes the journey of faith is scary because we can't see from God's vantage point, but Christ has promised us His goodness and mercy.

- ▶ *Why is recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel essential for saving faith?*

Believers are not called to have a random, blind faith, believers are called to have specific faith in Christ and what He has done for us. The gospel is the work Christ has accomplished on our behalf for our salvation.

3 Receiving Christ as Lord and Savior is a requirement for genuine faith (John 1:10-13).

Believers are commanded to trust Christ in two specific ways: As Lord, meaning master of everything as well as one's individual life, and as Savior, meaning as One who has paid believers' sin debt and rescued people from eternal separation from God.

- ▶ *What is the difference in accepting Jesus as "Lord" and "Savior"? How does this distinction make a difference in your life?*

Genuine faith in Christ requires acknowledgment and trust in both areas. Professing in Jesus as Lord, but not Savior (or vice versa) is, in reality, a rejection of Jesus completely. One has to believe both are true.

- ▶ *How can you deepen your trust in Jesus as both Lord and Savior?*
- ▶ *If you have not received Christ as both Lord and Savior, what holds you from making that decision?*

WRAP IT UP

- ▶ *How are you resting in Christ alone for your salvation?*
- ▶ *How is your confession and recognition of the gospel transforming you today?*

Challenge students to recognize ...

- ▶ biblical faith as resting and trusting in Christ alone for salvation
- ▶ that their salvation begins with a recognition and confession in the truthfulness of the gospel
- ▶ that receiving Christ as both Lord and Savior over their lives is a requirement for genuine, biblical faith in Christ.