



AND: Competence AND Character | October 4, 2017

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

Knowing the right thing and knowing how to do the right thing are the only way to come close to actually doing the right thing.

Key Verse

James 4:17 (MSG)

In fact, if you know the right thing to do and don't do it, that, for you, is evil.

Discussion

Picture a middle school lunchroom. All the kids are making fun of one kid. Based on your character, you decide not to make fun of the kid because you know it is wrong, but is that enough? We often like to talk about character. We take pride in our own character; in our own ability to differentiate right from wrong. However, character alone only goes so far, because while we know what is right and what is wrong, we still often do nothing about it.

1. What are some things that define a person's character to you?
2. Can you recall an instance when you knew what was right and you did nothing or you did the wrong thing?

Knowing what is right is a great a starting point, but it loses its effectiveness when we don't act on it. Additionally, there are instances when we don't know how and lack competence. The opposite can be true as well...if we are competent at something, but have no character in our actions, our competence can be corrupted.

3. Are there areas in your life where you may be competent, but may lack character?
4. Are there any places in your life currently where you know what to do but aren't doing anything about it?

The "AND" link between competence and character is integrity. Integrity convicts us to act on our competence of knowing how and our character of knowing right from wrong. A strong moral compass without an ability to act is fruitless, while competence without character can leave our actions tarnished. James warns us that knowing and acting are two very different things. God asks us to do more than know better and know how. He asks us to act.

5. What are some broken things in your world that feel called to do the right thing, but may not know how?
6. Are there any areas in your life that you need to examine and get help on moral compass, how to act on something, and/or courage to do something about it?

What's Next?

The good news is we don't have to do this life alone. There are people we can lean on who have gone before us and learned from mistakes. There are people who know more than us, who can teach us practical skills. Additionally, there are people who can hold us accountable to acting on things that we see in this world and in our life that need us to act. This week, identify places you in your life where you can develop skills, examine right and wrong, and actually decide to act and apply your competence and character.