



More Than You Can Handle: Faith | May 22, 2019

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

It seems easy to put our trust in something that's going well. But when things aren't going quite as planned, that's when faith shows up. Faith shows up when the lights go off. Hear more below.

Key Verses

Mark 9:17-24 (NIV)

"A man in the crowd answered, 'Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.'" "You unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me." So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the boy's father, 'How long has he been like this?' 'From childhood,' he answered. 'It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.'" "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes." Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, 'I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!'"

Discussion

When we walk into a dark room, or have to navigate to the bathroom in the middle of the night, many of us will close our eyes. We know we can't see even if we keep our eyes open, but for some reason this strategy helps us rely on the right senses to get us to where we need to go. When we leave our eyes open, we are trying to see in a place that we can't see – our eyes can't help us. But if we close them, we change our perspective and start to rely on the things we really need that will help us navigate.

1. Do you relate to this scenario? Do you close your eyes when the lights go off?
2. Why do you think our other senses are heightened when we close our eyes? What other evidence of this have you seen in people or in life?

Our faith actually works very similarly. When life is going well, it feels like we are navigating a room with the lights on. And this is comforting to most of us. That's why we have things like savings and insurance. We like to put our faith and trust in things that we can see and control. We even do this with hard work. We put effort into something knowing it's likely to pay off for us in the long run. Unfortunately, the reality is that life makes this pretty much impossible. Things happen outside of our control. We lose jobs, we lose people... and all of the sudden it feels like someone turned the lights off. And then we have choice, we can continue to try to navigate like we did when everything was going well, or we can choose to lean into our faith.

3. Why don't we immediately close our eyes in situations and circumstances in our life that feel hard and dark? Why do we try to keep seeing the same way?
4. When is a time or season in your life where it felt like someone turned off the lights? Did you continue to navigate like you would if things were going well? Or did you change your perspective?

In Mark 9:17-24, we read about a time where Jesus miraculously heals a spirit-possessed boy. Before he is healed, the boy's father asks Jesus to heal his son, if he can. Jesus responds that everything is possible for one who believes. The father says he does believe, and asks Jesus to help him overcome his unbelief. The father was very much in a dark room with the lights off. It distracted him from being able to see clearly and to trust in the miracle-working Jesus standing right in front of him.

5. What do you think got in the way of the father believing in Jesus' power?
6. Are there times in your life where you need to ask Jesus to help you overcome your unbelief? Why do you think this is the case?

What's Next?

In his book, *More Than You Can Handle*, Nate Pyle says that faith is hope in things unseen. And it's really easy when everything is going well and the lights are on. But what happens when life throws you a curveball and someone turns the lights off? Unfortunately, many of us get trapped when we try to navigate with the lights off, because we try to continue to see with the eyes we use when things are going well. All of us have experienced seasons in life where everything is going well, and then someone turns the lights off. In our faith, instead of doing what we were doing with the lights on, we need to start seeing with different eyes.

This week, as you live out and engage your faith, when you face difficulty and when things don't make sense, instead of heaping all of your sight onto the things that don't make sense, change the way you're looking at it. Lean on your faith when the room feels dark and you no longer can see with your eyes.