



Naked & Afraid: Authentic | November 14, 2018

Discussion Guide

The Scoop

The definition of authentic is genuine. It's who we are when we have none of our guards up. But how do we actually live that way? If you want to learn about how your faith asks you to live authentically, read more below.

Key Verses

Luke 9:23 (NIV)

"Then he said to them all: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.'"

Discussion

It's no secret that we live in a time where people crave authenticity, both in relationships as well as business. So much so, that it's even become a buzzword in our vocabulary, and when we say it, we picture a certain image or qualities. In most cases, however, the picture of authenticity that we see or create is just another mask we wear to protect ourselves from *actual* authenticity.

1. What qualities do you think of when you hear the word authentic?
2. What person, company or product do you consider an example of authenticity? Talk about some of their characteristics.

When it comes to our faith, many of us have believed a lie, somewhere along our journey, that we need to project the image of being a "perfect Christian." And when we do that, we hold back what's actually going on in our lives so that people can't really see how broken we are. We don't talk about "the real stuff." When we avoid that stuff and real accountability with others, we either lose touch or proceed to behave badly when the lights are off and no one's looking.

3. Have you believed the lie that you need to protect your image as a perfect Christian? Explain.
4. Why do you think we often default to wearing a mask instead of being vulnerable with the ways that we are broken and struggling? How might this interfere with our own spiritual growth?

In contrast to the lies that we believe about protecting our image, the Bible tells us pretty directly that our faith should be authentic. In Luke 9:23, Jesus explains that in order to follow him, we have to give up our own ways and take up our cross, daily. These two things are key components to being authentic. When we give up our self-preservation desire to protect ourselves from others and choose to walk into difficult things that we're afraid of, we give other people the gift of true authenticity.

5. In what ways do you think Jesus is an example of true authenticity? Give a few examples.
6. Why do you think these two things (deny ourselves and take up our cross) encourage us to live out our faith authentically?

What's Next?

In this series, we've been talking about how vulnerability can help us overcome our fears. When we are truly authentic, we are vulnerable as well. The definition of authenticity is genuine, and it has a purpose. It's not simply to declare that we are broken, but to admit that we need help becoming more like Jesus and that we're doing the best we can.

This week, as you live out your faith, look for places that you can deny yourself and be vulnerable. Identify situations where you can pick up your cross daily and face your fears to better follow Jesus. Look for opportunities where Jesus is asking you to go places that might require more of you than ever before. This week, engage your faith in new and vulnerable ways so that more people can see a true and authentic picture of Jesus.