

DISCUSSION NOTES

APRIL 23, 2017

Pray and ask God to teach you, help you trust Him more deeply, & strengthen you to live what you learn.

GETTING STARTED

1. Can you remember a time when you failed at something but learned a lesson (could be funny, could be significant)? Why do we have to learn some things through the experience of messing up?

DIGGING IN

2. Read Mark 9:14-32. Make 7-10 quick observations about these verses. Who is present? What happens? What is the mood? What emotions are on display? What is surprising? What changes? What is emphasized?
3. In verse 16, what question does Jesus ask the disciples? Who were they arguing with? What were they arguing about? Who answers Jesus' question?
4. In verses 19 and 23, Jesus points to the one basic problem of all who are involved. What is it?
5. Verse 22-23 contains a difficult discussion between Jesus and this father. Why do you think Jesus challenges the father's statement and pushes the man to commit to faith? In the end, does Jesus have compassion on the man and his boy?
6. How might Jesus' statement in verse 23 be twisted and made to say something Jesus did not intend?
7. In verse 24, how would you describe the father's belief statement? How does the boy's father respond in a better way than the disciples? How does Jesus react to this man's statement?
8. In verses 28-29, the disciples ask Jesus why they had failed in their attempt. Why is Jesus' response significant? What do we learn about our dependence upon God? How is this instructive for us?

LIVING IT OUT

9. Do you ever feel frustrated that you can't stay on the "mountaintop" with God and glory and clarity but have to go back down into the valley of conflict and pain and doubt?
10. What things are you "arguing about" with others or with yourself rather than taking them to the Lord in prayer? Do you have any recurring thoughts or conversations that suggest you are trying to solve the problems on your own?
11. Think about the father's statement: "I believe; help my unbelief!" Do you personally relate to this honest declaration? Why or why not?
12. How should Jesus' response to this man's imperfect faith encourage us? This week, how can you commit to put your faith in Jesus and ask him to help your unbelief?
13. At the end of your discussion, read Mark 9:31. How does the fact that Jesus died for us and rose from the dead —it is finished!—speak to your doubts and struggles? How should the cross and the empty tomb nourish our faith and our worship?