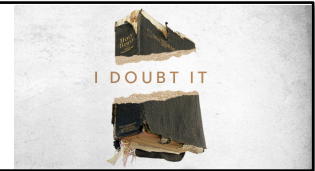


I DOUBT IT – LIFE Group Study Guide

RELIGIOUS EXCLUSIVITY

Pastor Miles McPherson – April 24, 2016



Review:

The take-home assignment from last week was a 21-day challenge: to read 1 chapter each day from the Gospel of John. Who took that challenge and how is it going?

Introduction:

Perhaps you've heard people say, "All roads lead to God" or "All religions are basically the same." But are they the same? Do they teach the same things? And isn't it a bit presumptuous to say that Christianity is right and all other faiths are wrong?

The truth is, world religions have some similarities, but they also have some very critical differences in the way they see God, morality, and even the purpose of life.

What does Christianity claim? Is that claim true? How does it compare to other religions? That's what we're going to wrestle with in this session.

Send your tough questions to Pastor Miles! Text "Questions" to 52525

Opening Discussion:

1. Share some of the things you do for a pet that they could not possibly do for themselves or even understand why you do it.
(If we are that much more capable than a pet, than how much more is God able to do for us in our daily lives?)*

2. What makes Christianity different from all other religions?

3. Share about a time when you had an interaction about faith with someone from another religion...

→ Consider engaging in the Role Play exercise from page 4

Bible Study:

Pastor Miles' shared that there are around 4200 religions in the world! The problem is, every religion has its' distinct beliefs, and many of those beliefs contradict beliefs from other religions. There is no way that conflicting beliefs can all be true – there has to be truth and falsehood. Consider the following:

- All religions (except for Christianity) say that you have to do certain good works or behaviors in order to reach God. Christianity teaches that we can't do anything to earn salvation, that Jesus did all the work and that instead of doing good works to earn his favor, we just need to trust in him (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- Some religions, such as Hinduism and Mormonism, teach that there are many gods; Christianity teaches that there is only one God.

Definition (Religion): a system of beliefs to live in harmony with whatever controls your world

→ **Read 1 John 4:1-6**

4. How do these verses relate to the discussion of different religions?
5. How do we discern what is true and what is not true?

→ **Read John 14:1-11**

6. What is Jesus referring to in verses 1-4?
7. In what ways do you relate to Thomas' question in v5?
8. How does verse 6 hit you?

→ **Read Isaiah 45:5-7**

9. What do you learn about God in these verses?
10. What does God want all people to know about himself?

Apply it to Your Life: [break into groups of 2-3]

Pastor Miles stated that while there are many religions in the world, Christianity is different because it's all about relationship, not rules. God, the creator of all, is a loving Father and wants to be in relationship with you!

11. What does it look like for you to pursue relationship with God in your life?
12. How can we encourage you to pursue that relationship more?



Prayer Time:

Put a chair in the center of the group and ask anyone who would like to have prayer sit in the chair (one at a time!). The rest of the group gathers around the person.

DON'T share your prayer requests... instead, the person in the chair prays their request to God, then other members of the group can pray for the person, for their request, etc.

GUIDELINES: Don't whine, complain, nag, or express other negativity in your prayer.

Instead, pray in positive faith for what you want to see God do in your situation (e.g. *Thank you God, that you are going to change my heart toward my wife and restore our marriage to be healthy and strong. Forgive me for being passive and resentful toward her; please replace those wrong attitudes with love, kindness and a serving heart toward her. Let me put into practice Philippians 2:3-4 "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Amen...*)

Next Steps:

BR1NG: Invite your friends to join you this Sunday at one of the Rock campuses for "I DOUBT IT," and then invite them to join you at your LIFE Group next week!

Take it Home:

Continue the 21-day Challenge of reading 1 Chapter/day in the Gospel of John (see last week's study at:

<http://www.sdrock.com/uploads/docs/discussionquestions/2016-04-17-sgquestions.pdf>)

For more on this topic:

- Excellent article that includes a list of many prophecies that Jesus fulfilled, attesting to his deity (that he is God):
<https://carm.org/why-believe-christianity-over-all-other-religions>
- Link to research on other religions: <https://carm.org/world-religions>



LIFE Group Leader Tip of the Week:

➤ ACTIVITY TO ENGAGE IN AS A GROUP:

Role Play: Ask for 2 volunteers. One will be a Christian who goes to the Rock and the other is an atheist.

Talking points for the Atheist:

- If there is a God and he is so good, why is there so much evil in the world?
- There is no god - he does not speak to me.
- You can't prove there is a god based on 'feelings'
- I have everything to live for in this short life - I just have nothing to die for.

Talking points for the Christian:

- Where did everything come from?
- Do you believe in gravity and the wind? Have you seen either?
- If I'm wrong about God, then I'm in the same situation as you at death, but if you are wrong, at death it's too late to say "oops, my bad and not get into heaven." (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pascal%27s_Wager)
- Invite them to the Rock next Sunday.

➤ CULTIVATE RELATIONAL CARE IN YOUR GROUP– E-S-P-N:

E – ENCOURAGE people

S – Share SCRIPTURE

P – PRAY with them

N – What's their NEXT STEP?

"Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God."

1 Peter 5:2 (NLT)

