

Shouldn't I Be True to my Myth? | John 8:31-32 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion:

- Reflect, discuss, and name our inner experiential and intuitive lives.
- Reflect and discuss where and how we can teach, train, and invite those misguided parts of our inner experiential and intuitive lives to re-align and follow the realities of God's story in the Bible.

Sermon Reminder: Dave continued our sermon series "Bad Ideas that Good Christians Believe" by discussing how our inner experiential and intuitive lives are prioritized. They are what guide and inform the day-to-day decisions of our lives. The only problem is, we have a faulty inner GPS, which leads us to places and spaces that God does not intend for us to go.

Lesson Overview: This small group lesson has two main parts:

- Part 1 takes our "right and wrong" hats off to name and discuss what IS. It is a reflection and discussion of our inner experiential and intuitive life - What sounds right? What feels natural?
- Part 2 is when we put our "right and wrong" hats back on. This where we will teach, train and invite those misguided parts of our inner experiential and intuitive lives to re-align and follow the realities of God's story, which of course we find in the Bible.

Part 1 – Inner Experiential and Intuitive Life

1. Picture yourself as a senior in high school. What did you love? What were you all about? How did you think the world worked then? What is the most important thing you know now that you didn't back then?

2. Read Psalm 139:1-4 out loud: "You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely." What does this verse teach us about God?

3. What are some inner voices and/or experiences that you feel and sense? Where and how do you find yourself listening to them? Where and how are you being drawn to and guided by them? Where and how does this look like in your life, presently or in the past? Remember, God knows these already. Do you?

Part 2 – Teaching, Training, & Invitation

Quick story (from Austin): my ten-year-old daughter's confidence is off the charts. She has an opinion on any and everything, including the way she thinks she needs to be parented. If it were up to her, she would be allowed to be on the *kid* phone (not *her* phone) 25 hours/day. Our response as parents, for better or worse, has two movements. First, we thank her for expressing her opinions, "We are so thankful you told us that. We would rather you tell us than not." Second, we correct and explain what will be happening instead, "You will not use the *kid* phone whenever you want. We have, and will continue, to set limits on your screen time because we love you, so please trust us. Love you." Notice our strategy. First, we affirmed and welcomed the questions. Second, we corrected and instructed the way things will be going forward, all with the hope that she will continue to follow us.

The point? I think this story mirrors the way forward with our inner experiential and intuitive lives. First, we want to address any and all voices, experiences, and intuitions (what we just did in part 1). If we stuff those down or shut them up, they'll come back more intensely in the future. Second, we teach, train, and invite those voices to re-align and follow God's way of life in the Bible. For the rest of the study, we'll do just that...

4. Dave quoted author Rebecca McLaughlin in the sermon, "It has been said that no friendship in the world would last a day if we could see each other's thoughts. Run that test on yourself between now and tomorrow. Think of everyone you spend time with and ask, would I let them see a transcript of my thoughts? My marriage would die. My children would be crushed. My friends would leave. **My thoughts are not all bad: many are good and kind and true. But like a bag of flour infested by maggots, no part of me is pure.**"

Think back to your inner thoughts, experiences, and voices that you discussed in question 3. Which of them do you sense needs to be spoken to the most? What part of the biblical story is missing? What do they not understand?

5. If you're still a little unsure of where and how to correct these emotions, that's ok. This is often difficult and confusing. It is a process. A good place to begin teaching, training, and inviting our inner experiential and intuitive lives comes from Galatians 5:16-26. This is the kind of inner (and outer) life Jesus wants us to strive for.

Read the verses below out loud together and reflect and discuss where and how they give you a direction and place for your inner experiential and intuitive life to head towards instead. Specifically...

- Are there particular desires of the flesh (17-21) that characterize your inner emotional and intuitive life?
- Which fruit of the Spirit (22-23) seems most attractive, or most needed, for you right now?

*Galatians 5:16-26 - **16** So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.**17** For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. **18** But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. **19** The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; **20** idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions **21** and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. **22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. **24** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. **26** Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.*

Conclusion – Sharing and Prayer

6. What was something that struck you in this lesson? What do you want and/or need to carry with you this week?

7. Where and how do you sense you need prayer, specifically concerning the content and character of your inner experiential and intuitive life?

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Digging Deeper (optional)

This week, take some time to think and reflect on the following questions. If you really want to go the extra mile, meet up with someone else - your spouse, a friend, another small group member - and discuss these together.

- Regardless of whatever (good) *intentions* you may have had, what negative real-life *impact* on others has come about by uncritically following your inner experiential and intuitive life? On yourself? On your relationship with God?
- Where and how can I be a resource to invite someone else to reflect and discuss their own inner emotional and intuitive experience? What might happen if and when I initiated this conversation?