



MEETING AGENDA

WELCOME (10 MINUTES)

This week we begin our new series, *Light in the Darkness*. In our second week, we'll talk about how it is in Babylon that our faith is tested. During these seasons and moments of testing, we can exchange counterfeit faith for genuine faith. We will see from the story of Daniel what true genuine faith looks like in the face of hardship.

This week we are including a bonus question to help us think about reaching two as we approach Easter. We will reference a chapter from *Sharing the Gospel with Ease* by Thom S. Rainer that we included in our H.O.S.T. Kit. This is an optional going deeper opportunity for your group.

Please don't forget to take attendance via the attendance reminder email.

ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

Have you ever had a recurring dream or one you remembered after waking up?

INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

(Feel free to use one or all the following introductory questions)

Read Daniel 2:1-30,46-47.

Was there one idea from Pastor David's message that particularly stood out to you? Share that with the group.

INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

Read James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 1:6-7. What stands out to you about how several of the heroes of the faith, such as Abraham, Moses, David, and Peter, dealt with failure in their lives while still being faithful?

What truths about the role of testing in our lives from the two passages stick out to you?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Faith is not the absence of failure. It is comforting to remember as we face many life trials and challenges. God is working on us where we are, and we also can develop genuine faith as we faithfully follow God even amid our failures. Hardships can produce authentic Christ-like character that equips us for God's work. Peter experienced failures but learned and grew from his experiences, developed perspective, seeing the value of genuine faith through hardships.]

Read Matthew 13:3-9. Jesus here explains four types of soil as a metaphor for hearing versus living out the word of God. Faith that isn't tested can't be trusted, and we like the soils, can be guilty of counterfeit faith.

This can look like the following:

- Having good intentions but not following through.
- Having high morals but not applying the word of God to their lives.
- Having dramatic starts but not finishing well.

Can you relate to any of the soils mentioned in Matthew 13, or the examples of faith listed above ring true to where you were at? If so, what did that look like for you?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

["To summarize the point of the Parable of the Sower: 'A man's reception of God's Word is determined by the condition of his heart.' A secondary lesson would be 'Salvation is more than a superficial, albeit joyful, hearing of the gospel. Someone who is truly saved will go on to prove it.' May our faith and our lives exemplify the "good soil" in the Parable of the Sower." (gotquestions.org) When our faith is tested, and we remain, we can develop deep-rooted genuine faith.]

APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

[Hosts: don't feel pressure to cover all the questions below. Pick the one or two questions that might lead to the best conversation, but if discussion fades, include the others.]

We see in Daniel 2:12-16 that Daniel responds to the dangerous situation facing him with perspective, prudence, or carefulness rooted in God. Are there any difficult situations in your life currently? What would responding with perspective and carefulness look like for you in your situation?

In verses 17-19, we see Daniel keep trusting God and building endurance as he includes his community to pray for God to show Daniel the king's dream. Is there an area or situation where you should invite your community or keep trusting God for a response?

Where in your life are you not currently following, or where do you need to take a step-in obedience?

PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Father God,

We thank you for being in control even when it can feel like our worlds are out of control. Remind us that testing our faith helps replace counterfeit faith with genuine faith that builds us up and draws us closer to you. As we walk through many hard and difficult situations, we may grow in our endurance and faith, knowing that You are at work and will be glorified regardless of the outcome. May the way we endure shine a light on our communities and point others toward You. Please bring people into our lives that can put their faith in You, Jesus. We pray all of this in Jesus' name, amen.

REACH 2 EMPHASES (BONUS)

(As we get closer to Easter, we want to think about people we can invite to Easter and share the Gospel with. This is an opportunity to discuss and get more comfortable with the idea of sharing our faith. If you or a member feels uncomfortable responding to these objections, see the page numbers for information. Each group leader received a copy of this book with their H.O.S.T. Kit.)

In chapter 6 of Thom S. Rainer's book, *Sharing the Gospel with Ease*, he shares eight common objections people have about following Jesus:

- **I'm not a bad person.** (pg. 111-113)
 - As long as the scales tilt in their favor because of the good they have done, they will be accepted into heaven.
- **I've done too many bad things.** (pg. 113-115)
 - I feel like the scales are tilted too far because of what I have done. I don't believe I will be accepted into heaven.
- **I'll think about it later.** (pg. 115-117)
 - I have plenty of time to surrender my life to Christ. I can decide later – maybe.
- **How can a loving God let bad things happen to people?** (pg. 117-120)
 - I have difficulty believing in a God that allows bad things to happen.
- **There are many ways to get to heaven or God.** (pg. 120-121)
 - This feels exclusive, and I want to be as inclusive as possible.
- **I believe in God.** (pg. 121-122)
 - I believe in a God, but I don't believe that Jesus is God.
- **The church has hurt me.** (pg. 122-124)
 - How can I believe in Jesus when His followers are sometimes terrible?
- **How can I believe the Bible is true?** (pg. 124-127)
 - How do you deal with all the contradictions and errors in scripture?

Which objection do you find most prevalent with people you live with who do not know Jesus? Which one do you feel most ill-equipped to have a response for?

