

Small Group Study Guide

What is a person to do when they experience a “Dark Night of the Soul?” |
Jude 1:22, Mark 9:24, James 1:12, Job 23:8-9 | James 1:5, Psalms 19:1-4a |
Psalms 42:5-6, Proverbs 12:25, Job 3:11-19, Psalms 40:1-2, Luke 4:18-19 |
Philippians 4:6, Isaiah 40:29-31, Romans 8:38-39

From Sunday, August 9th, 2020

Appetizers

Question: The term “dark night (of the soul)” in Catholic history describes a spiritual crisis in the journey toward union with God, like that described by St. John of the Cross in the 16th century. What does that look like in BC in 2020?

Have someone read the passages for the day.

What stands out to you?

Main Course:

Question: Have you ever experienced a “dark night of the soul?” What was this experience like? How did it affect you?

The sermon focused on two aspects to a “dark night of the soul”:

1. Doubt
 - a. Doubt is normal
 - b. God is faithful
2. Depression
 - a. Biblical examples
 - b. Biblical suggestions

Question: Tom suggested doubt was like a “science fair hypothesis” or ice on a river. Do either of those make sense to you? What would be another way to illustrate doubt without a negative connotation?

Question: doubt sometimes occurs because of the tension between truth and cultural practice. What are other possible examples of truth versus culture?

Question: which Biblical example of doubt resonated with you the most? Why?

Question: had you ever thought of depression as being present in the Bible? Can you think of other examples? Does it help to focus on them? Why or why not?

Question: Tom said that “perception is not [always] reality.” What did he mean by that? How can one’s emotions impact how they perceive the world around them in terms of how they feel or think?

Dessert:

Question: Tom said that it is important to recognize both doubt and depression as a part of life, and to not “go it alone.” Why? What makes isolating these feelings worse?

Question: Tom challenged us to memorize one of the scriptures that really resonated with you, or write it somewhere you will regularly see it to be a timely reminder: *even though I am doubting, or depressed, the Bible shows me that...* Was there a verse for you? Why would it help to memorize it or read it multiple times in a day?

Question: how does the truth of God’s unconditional love combat the feelings of shame that can occur in church environments in regards to expressing doubt or revealing mental health concerns?

Take time as a group to pray for people that may be dealing with seasons of doubt or depression. Pray that God reveals himself to them and brings them life and encouragement in the midst of their suffering.