

Small Groups - “Hello God, is that you”?

by Pastor Richard Braun

Date: _____

Week _____

Icebreaker

In close circles of friends, we sometimes hear stories about miracles. Have you ever heard someone share one with you, or were you directly involved in a miracle? Please share your experience with the group.

Opening Prayer

Dear God, sometimes I feel out of touch with you. Sometimes my life seems empty. Please help me understand how you speak and, most importantly, help me listen and follow your will for my life. Even if I do not understand miracles in my life, please help me to live what I do understand. Amen

Open It

1. Are you a good listener? How do you know? Can you give an example?
2. Try to remember a sermon on God speaking. Describe the essence of the message.
3. How do you see God working in our world today? How do you know it's God?
4. As we celebrate Christ's triumph or victory over the grave, why is it essential or relative to understanding how God speaks?

2 Tim. 3:14-17 In the Living Bible, Paul talks to Timothy and gives him words of encouragement. [14] But you must keep on believing the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know that you can trust those of us who have taught you. [15] You know how, when you were a small child, you were taught the holy Scriptures, and it is these that make you wise to accept God's salvation by trusting in Christ Jesus. [16] The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. [17] It is God's way of making us well-prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone.

Explore It

1. What kind of opportunity have you had to study the Bible? Did your study answer most of your questions, or did it raise new ones for you? Please describe the process.
2. Where do you get your questions answered today about God, the Bible, or Jesus Christ? If you don't have any questions, what does that mean? Why do you think you don't have any questions?
3. What does the “infallible Word of God mean to you”? Describe in your own words.
4. When two scripture passages contradict each other, how do you reconcile them in your mind?
5. The Living Bible is a translation of scripture on a thought-by-thought basis, not word-for-word. Is that translation method better for you, or should we only read from and learn from a word for word translations like the New King James or NRSV? State your logic here.
6. What seems to be the real purpose of the Holy Scriptures? See 2 Tim3:15 for a clue.

Get It

1. How does God speak to you through scripture? Describe what you mean by speaking to you.

2. As God speaks to us today in various ways, should the new knowledge we obtain supersede current scripture? After all, this is a new revelation. Why/why not?

3. I believe scripture does not mention there will be any additional revelation or enlightenment in later times; in fact, read Matt 24:4 & 11-14. How do we know the good stuff from the bad stuff? Read I John 1:4, Matt 7:15-17 - then test if this new knowledge more fully glorifies God.

Read - The writer raises Christ above all prior prophets, angels, and even Moses, Joshua, or Aaron. Hebrews 1:1-4 NASB - Some scholars suggest Priscilla, the wife of Aquila, as the author.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, [2] in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. [3] And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; [4] having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

4. Since God spoke through Christ as shown in scripture, Heb 1:2, what does that mean to each of us as we read scripture today? Do we ignore Old Testament teaching in light of Christ's new revelation and message? Explain if you can.

Apply It

1. God speaks, but do we listen? My wife Sharon has been sharing a book with me called "The Ancient Aramaic prayer of Jesus," "the Lord's Prayer," written by Roccoa Errico. The book explains how the word prayer in Aramaic had special significance to Jesus. The literal word for prayer in Aramaic is *slotha*, which stems from the root word *sla*, meaning to trap. In so many words, it means to set your mind like a trap to catch the thoughts of God. I'd encourage reading this book.

2. A. W. Tozer has been called a "20th-century prophet" by some. He wrote over 40 books in his lifetime. There is a short chapter from one of his books called "Man: The Dwelling Place of God." If you're interested in exploring your understanding of how God works in this world, I recommend reading this and discussing it at one of the small group meetings.

3. In some Christian circles, people seek to find God's guiding hand in every event they encounter. They might be thinking about becoming a missionary, a genuinely noble thought, and as they walk down the street, they trip and fall. A map of India happens to be on the street. When they fall, their right-hand lands on India. Is this God's way of telling them to go to India to be a missionary? It could be, but likely it's not. Greg Koukl, a Christian apologist and author, has put together a study on *Decision Making and the Will of God*. It's amplified in a book called *Hard Questions: About Life, Death, and After Life*, by Pastor Richard Braun. A website for small groups sells the book. Hardquestionsforsmallgroups.com – you can also get the book on Amazon.com.

Closing Prayer - Oh Lord, thank you for giving us your Holy Spirit. Please help us set our minds like traps to catch your thoughts and have your Spirit remind us daily of your grace. Also, Lord, use your Spirit to convict us of sin and continue to reveal your wisdom to us as we study your Word. Amen