



Find Out Firsthand | Doug Wekenman | 8.2.20
Weekly Study

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

Suppose you could go on one all-expense paid vacation right now. Where would you go and who would you bring?

SHARE

Welcome to our final week of Follow Me. In this series, we are looking at the invitation to be a disciple (a student) of Jesus. As Christians, we are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. In fact, the word disciple is used 268 times in the New Testament. This week, Doug finished the series by talking about the importance of finding out how amazing Jesus is firsthand. But before we jump into what that looks like, take some time to check in with your Group by having everyone answer these questions:

Rate your week on a scale of 1 to 10. Why did you pick the number you did?

What was the most inspiring conversation you had this week?

What is one thing God is continuing to teach you during this pandemic?

GROW

Read Acts 9:1-6

What do you know about this passage? Why is this moment such a significant turning point in the church?

Which verse stuck out to you as you read it?

The passage you just read is a pivotal point in Scripture. A man named Saul is persecuting the church, but in one moment, he has an encounter with God, and it changes the trajectory of his life. Experiencing God firsthand changed everything about his life, including his name. Saul became Paul, and he went on to be an extraordinary church planter and write 13 of the 27 books in the New Testament.

As soon as Paul experienced God firsthand, he repented. He turned from his old life and turned toward the new, and the rest is history!

That's the power of experiencing God firsthand. As Doug reminded us this week, "Repentance is not a Christian cuss word, it is a beautiful, daily invitation to turn around because Jesus is better. Repentance is not turning away from the good stuff; it's turning toward it."

Have you ever experienced God firsthand? Tell the Group about it.

Have you ever felt God's invitation to repent? Tell the Group about it.

Jesus did not come back from the dead so that you can stand on the sideline and watch. The invitation is to get in the game and find out how amazing God is firsthand. There is a difference between knowing things about Jesus and knowing him through experience. In fact, the Greek language has two different words for knowing.

Eidó: (Greek) To perceive with the outward senses.

Ginosko: (Greek) To come to know by experience.

When the Bible invites us to know God it often uses the word "ginosko" to invite us to experience firsthand. The invitation is not just to know things about Jesus, because when you start following Jesus, you find out three things firsthand:

1. God is all you need.

2. God is all you want.
3. Your appointment with Jesus has come.

Which of those three things is the easiest for you to believe? Why do you think that is?

Which of those three things is the most difficult for you to believe? Why do you think that is?

M O V E

Read Psalm 34:1-8

What do you know about the Psalms?

Which verse stuck out to you in this Psalm? Why?

In the middle of the Bible, there are 150 worship songs; we call them Psalms. The 34th Psalm was written by King David, a man who experienced God firsthand. In the eighth verse, he invites us to do the same:

“Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him” (Psalm 34:8).

The Bible calls David a man after God’s own heart, but it wasn’t because his life was easy. His life was full of hardship. When David pursued God, his life may not have gotten more comfortable, but it was infused with meaning. He suffered greatly for God, but there was always pain in his purpose.

With God, desperation and disappointment are not wasted; they’re leveraged.

Are you going through a difficult season right now? If so, where do you see God in the middle of the storm?

What do you think God may be trying to teach you during this season?

What is one practical way your Group can walk with you through this time?

Take-Home Assignment: Taste and See

This week, let's take David up on his invitation to "taste and see that the Lord is good." As a Group, come up with one tangible (and new) way that you can all know (ginosko) God a little more this week. Once you land on an option, commit to texting each other once you've completed the task!

Let's hold each other accountable and find out what it's like to follow Jesus firsthand!

P R A Y

We need prayer now more than ever. Spend some time sharing prayer requests. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking off into two separate calls to share more freely.

T O G O

I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.

Psalm 34:1