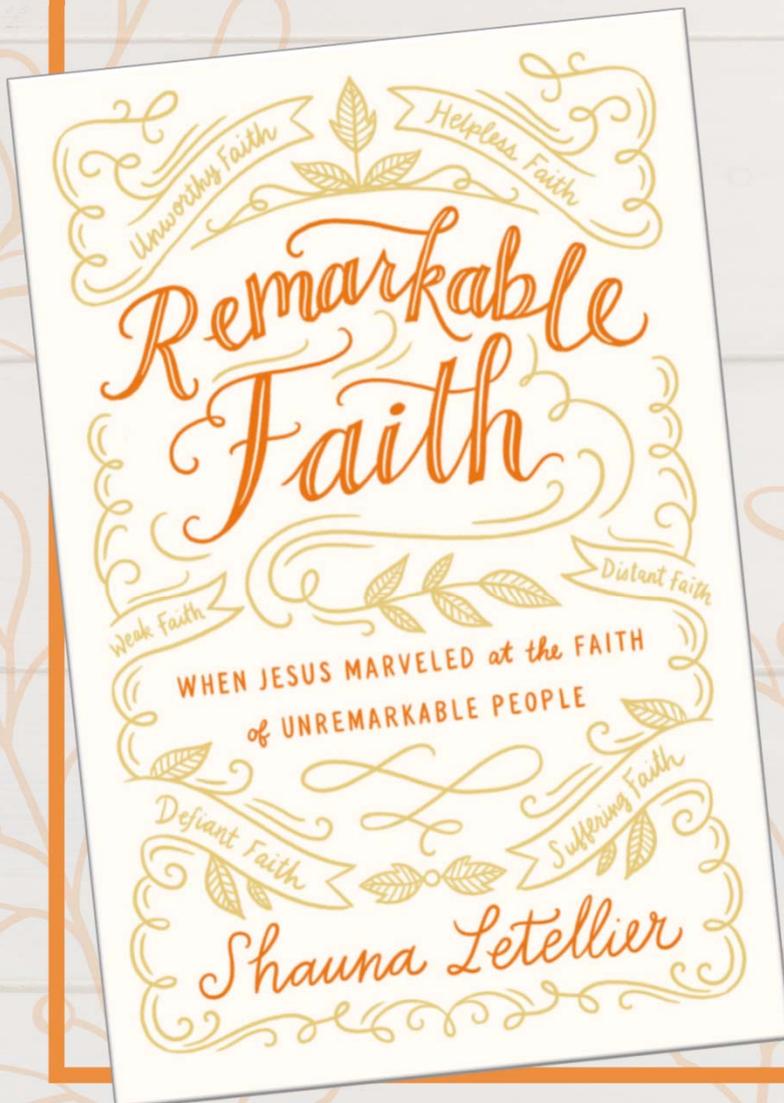


Remarkable Faith

Companion
Discussion Guide



Remarkable Faith

Discussion Guide

Finding Faith

1. What Bible characters or stories come to mind when you think of examples of remarkable faith?
2. How about contemporary examples of faith?

Weak Faith: The Father of a Demon- Possessed Boy (Mark 9: 17- 27)

1. How would you respond to someone calling you a person of weak faith?
2. Since 1971 Jim Cymbala has been the pastor of the non-denomination, multi-racial Brooklyn Tabernacle. What is your response to his declaration? "I discovered an astonishing truth: God is attracted to weakness. He can't resist those who humbly and honestly admit how desperately they need Him."
3. Read 2 Corinthians 12: 1-10. What encouragement did Paul give the original readers (the Corinthian church) regarding weaknesses?
4. In what areas of your life can you ask God to help your unbelief?

Helpless Faith: The Paralyzed Man (Mark 2: 1- 12)

1. Read Mark 2: 8-12. What truths did Jesus intend to prove by publically forgiving the man's sins and healing him?
2. Did they understand what Jesus was saying about himself?
3. Can you think of (or share) a time when God used difficult circumstances to draw you to himself so he could tend to your more pressing spiritual illness?
4. What are some "acts of faith" the church (or you) normally applaud? What are the spiritual risks to the person who God has gifted with those visible, admirable acts of faith?
5. Who has "carried you to Jesus" so to speak?

Unworthy Faith: The Roman Centurion (Luke 7: 1- 10)

1. What are some ways we try to place God in our service? Put another way, what are some subtle ways we try to manipulate God into following our orders?
2. What are the dangers of comparing ourselves to other people instead of comparing ourselves to Christ?
3. When we compare ourselves to Christ we see we've fallen short of God's requirement of righteous perfection. Why do you think the centurion didn't despair over his unworthiness?
4. What keeps us from despairing?
5. Read Romans 5:1. In several translations (HCSB, NET Bible, & YLT) the word "justified" has also been translated "declared righteous." How does that definition of "justified" affect your understanding of Romans 5:1?

Suffering Faith: The Hemorrhaging Woman (Mark 5: 21- 34)

{For further study, read Leviticus 15:19-31 to find out what Laws the hemorrhaging woman was continually trying to obey}

1. All but three verses of Psalm 119 include a reference to the goodness of God's Law. The Psalmist uses 176 verses to tell the God how good His law is. Why did he speak so positively about the Law?
2. The Law of Moses and the Old Testament Books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy can be perplexing to 21st century believers. If "The Law was the means to get rid of the sin that provoked his anger and provide fellowship between the human and the Divine the way he had instituted it in the beginning" what was the problem? (see Romans 3:20, Romans 7:11)
3. Read Galatians 3:24. The Law was our tutor, teacher, guide schoolmaster, to teach us and lead us to our need for Jesus. Jesus fulfilled the Law (Matt. 5:17). He obeyed the Law perfectly because he was God.
4. How does the story of the Hemorrhaging Woman depict what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21 "He made him who knew no sin to become sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God."?

Distant Faith: The Samaritan Leper (Luke 17: 11- 19)

In researching this story I read, In His Image by Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey. I've taken the following description of leprosy from Dr. Brand's Website:

"Leprosy is a mildly infectious disease associated with poverty. It is easily cured. [Today, but not in New Testament times]. Leprosy starts by damaging the small nerves on the skin's surface resulting in a loss of sensation. Without the gift of pain, everyday activities are fraught with danger. Unnoticed burns and ulcers can lead to permanent disability. Due to the inability to detect grit in the eye, blindness is a common consequence of leprosy.

What Happens

Leprosy starts by damaging the small nerves in the skin's surface. The first outward sign is usually discoloured patches where there is no feeling. If treated at this early stage, damage or disability is unlikely.

Disability

If left untreated, leprosy goes on to damage the large nerves in the elbow, wrist, knee and ankle. The resulting damage can lead to loss of sensation in the hands and feet and muscle paralysis, which causes clawed fingers and foot drop. Loss of sensation in the hands and feet means everyday activities are fraught with danger – burns go unrecognised and stones in shoes unnoticed leading to ulcers developing. These can be difficult to heal and become infected, often leading to the shortening of fingers and toes or ultimately, amputation of limbs."

It's distinctive feature is that "leprosy destroys pain nerves, making the body devastatingly vulnerable to injury." (Brand & Yancey, p. 229) Without pain nerves, a victim of leprosy does not notice a splinter, or a cut. Such small wounds easily become infected, but without pain nerves, the infection is not bothersome and therefore goes untreated."

Citation: <https://www.leprosymission.org.uk/about-us-and-leprosy/what-is-leprosy/> (accessed May 8, 2017).

{For further study, read Leviticus 13 & 14 to observe the devastating nature of leprosy on a person, family and community.}

1. This story is usually approached as an example of gratitude. Examine the order of events. When was the man healed? Before or after he gave thanks?
2. Does his thankfulness earn his healing? What does he receive?
3. Read Ephesians 2:12-14. How does the story of the Samaritan Leper demonstrate some of what Paul is explaining to the Ephesians?
4. When do you feel closest to Christ?

Panicked Faith: Mother of a Demon- Possessed Girl (Matthew 15: 21- 18)

1. In what ways is Jesus still portrayed as one of many assorted gods?
2. Read Acts 17: 24-31. How does Paul explain how and why Jesus is different from all the false gods in Corinth?
3. How does Jesus say it in his own words in John 14:6?
4. How would you describe Jesus' reaction to this woman's "impoliteness?"
5. What are some false "gods" we purposefully or inadvertently worship that continually take from us in order to destroy?
6. What has Jesus given you in the past, present or future? What has it cost you?

Defiant Faith: Blind Bartimaeus (Luke 18: 35- 43)

1. What is your gut reaction to Brennan Manning's declaration that "We are all, equally, privileged but unentitled beggars at the door of God's mercy!"
2. How does it strike you when you read that the gifts of spiritual neediness, dependence and our inability to repay are holy advantages?
3. Give an example of how your spiritual poverty has driven you to Jesus. What were the results? Have you ever felt "hushed" when crying out to Jesus for help?
4. Read Psalm 37:4. What desires did Jesus give to the blind man?

Flagrant Faith: A Forgiven Woman Honors Jesus (Luke 7: 36- 50)

1. Recall what Jesus said about this woman's sin (Luke 7:47 and via his metaphor Luke 7:41)
2. What is the difference between the two debtors and the two sinners (the Pharisee and the woman)?
3. Jesus said in Matthew 22:37 that the first and greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." What happens when we love God? (Hint: See John 14:15, 21, & 23.)
4. Which commands had the Forgiven woman obeyed with her raw display?
5. What usually spurs you on to obey Jesus?

Remarkable Faith in Disguise:

1. What is your response to John Piper's analogy of the paralyzed person who honors the caretaker with requests?
2. Discuss Alistair Begg's statement, "If dependence on God is the objective, then weakness is an advantage."
3. Which story or section of Remarkable Faith, stood out to you the most?