

## **SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE**

Message Series:      GOOD QUESTION!  
Message Title:        Your Faith Questions: Origins  
Speaker:               Pastor Kevin Myers  
Date:                   August 6, 2017

### **Icebreaker:**

Do you remember learning to ride a bike, or teaching your kids to ride a bike? What most sticks out to you about the experience? Were you afraid, or did you trust the person who was training you?

### **Message Overview:**

This week's message was the first in the *Good Questions* series. Pastor Kevin (PK) described how the philosophers of Athens asked a good question to Paul: "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean" (Acts 17:19-20). Paul taught them about Jesus and listened to their questions. In this series, PK is going to teach and answer questions submitted by you to campus pastors.

We have all sat down to complete a jigsaw puzzle at one time or another – and the system most of us use for completing a puzzle is to find the four corners first, and then piece together the flat-edged pieces to create a complete frame. It is only after putting together the framework that you can see how all the smaller pieces fit together in the middle. That's a metaphor for life and faith. The four weeks of this series will cover the four big questions in life, which are the corners of the framework for the puzzling questions that you have. The way you answer these four BIG questions determine how everything else in your life fits into place.

### **Four Big Questions:**

- **Origins: Where do I come from?**
- **Meaning: Why am I here?**
- **Morals: Who am I?**
- **Destiny: Where am I going?**

### **Discussion:**

(Leaders: The questions that follow are designed to stir reflection and discussion on this week's primary message points. Please read through them prior to your meeting, so you can be prepared to prayerfully pace your group well. And remember, as leader, your goal is to promote increased *biblical* awareness, as well as individual *self* awareness – a combination that with the help of the Holy Spirit, results in revelation and...transformation!)

This week, PK answered faith questions, but before he did, he taught that there are two things you need to know about questions and answers in life:

1. You answer life's questions from your **view** of **God**.

**Read Acts 17:16-27.** What did Paul see in the Areopagus that told him what the Athenians' view of God was? In contrast, what was Paul's view of God?

PK described a 6-year-old boy learning to ride a bike. The dad pushed him in a straight line but the boy couldn't keep the bike moving without a push from his Dad, and he couldn't turn around. The question the boy had was how to start and how to turn, but these questions had to be answered in the context of bigger questions, like "Where did I come from?". A lot of our faith questions also start there. We ask our questions in the context of what we believe about where we come from. The boy knew the answers to **where do I come from?** He originated from his dad, and each time he looked to his dad for the answer to how to ride the bike.

- Paul said, "I see that you are very religious." Like the Athenians, have you ever practiced religion or spirituality but didn't really know where you came from or really knew the God you were worshipping?
- Have you trusted God as your Heavenly Father, and believe that he is the source of your creation?
- Do you remember when you first understood that God was your Father?
- How did that change you (ie. the way you made decisions, moral judgments, your view of eternity, etc.)?

PK discussed the philosophers Paul was addressing that day. The stoics believed in many gods. They were intellectuals who believed they did not need God; what they needed was to master themselves with the goal of self-sufficiency. The stoics *endured* life. The other half of the equation was the epicurians. They were materialists who pursued pleasure and avoided pain. They believed the pursuit of pleasure was the definition of the good life. The epicurians *indulged* life. there was a God, he was uninvolved and could not be known – the people of the day believed he was distant. (Does that sound like the world we live in today?) However, Paul stepped onto the scene to teach that the way to true life was not by enduring or indulging, but that both the stoics and the epicureans had been missing the true life that God offers them. He began to tell them where they came from, not from a God that they made, but a God who made them. The second thing you need to know about questions and answers in life is:

**2. There is one God and He can be known.**

Paul said, "The God who made the world and everything in it . . ." That includes you!

God made you—you cannot make him!

You need God—He does not need you.

God's heart is to give and he is near you.

Paul told them that God was near and knowable. Like the kid on the bike, God the father will help us to navigate the journey and he is a good father who wants the best for his kids. When you realize that for yourself, then like Paul, you will not be **insecure** or **silent** about Jesus, because we will want to share him with those who are enduring life or indulging life separated from God.

- Reread the three statements PK made about God. Do you live like you believe them?
- Can others see that you believe them? Think about your interactions with people over the past week.

- Would they say that you are insecure or silent about Jesus, or that you live out your belief that God is a good father?

PK taught that the way we answer our questions in life depend on our view of God and understanding that there is one God and He can be known. We received questions about faith from 12Stoners. The first two are detailed here. Visit the 12Stone app to review Sunday's teaching and to see other questions, including questions that didn't make it into Sunday's teaching due to time constraints.

- **How can you approach atheists about faith?**

PK highlighted the importance of being respectful of people who have questions and different beliefs. He presented three truths that he discusses with people who do not yet believe:

**Existence** (Does life make sense apart from a creator? Cover the four cornerstones.)

**Evidence** (What are the facts? Creation/intelligent design, Messianic prophecy, the living Christ, his resurrection, etc.)

**Experience** (As you live it out, does it become more real?)

However, it is important that we establish a relationship with our neighbor, and that we live out our beliefs so that we are believable. We cannot just go out on social media and tell people that they need Jesus. They need to see that we are experiencing the kingdom of God in our lives and evidence of it in us and then they will start looking for the existence of God.

- Do you have any atheists (do not believe there is a God) or agnostics (believe there may be a God, but He is not active in the lives of people today) in your life?
- Have you been trying to reach them? Have you made an impact?
- Did you learn anything from PK's brief teaching that will change your method of reaching people who matter to God?

- **How do you hear the voice of God?**

PK often talks about being in tune with God and hearing him speak to him. On Sunday, he answered how God speaks to us. First, God spoke to us through creation so that he would be obvious. He spoke to us through the prophets so that we would know that he speaks to us. He fulfilled prophecy so that we would know that it was Him who was talking. He sent His Son to earth to speak directly to us. He wrote this all down through the authors of the books of the Bible. All of this is God's universal voice. It is available to all of us to know the general will of God for all of our lives.

**Read 1 Timothy 2:3-4.** Paul tells us that God wants everyone to be saved and "come to a knowledge of the truth." The truth is Jesus Christ, and the story of Jesus Christ (the reason he had to come to save us from our sins begins in Genesis, the prophecies of who he would be and how he would save us are found throughout the Old Testament,

and his life, death, and resurrection are detailed in the New Testament) is found throughout the Bible. We go to the Bible to hear the voice of God speaking to us.

**Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.** We learn from Scripture because it comes straight from God's mouth. He speaks to us through the Bible. In response to that knowledge, Paul called us to submit to Christ's lordship. As we submit to God and stop conforming to the world, we can begin to test His voice in more specific ways. PK encouraged us to practice the universal will of God and we will begin to hear the unique word of God.

**Read Romans 12:1-2.** As we learn the truth about what God has already said, we want to follow Him even more. Our minds are transformed as we listen to his universal voice, and then we can begin to hear his specific voice—a still small voice whispering to us in our time of Bible study, prayer, and obedient living.

- Do you find it difficult to consistently read the Bible? If so, why?
- Did PK's teaching or some other encouragement help you to desire to read Scripture more often and engage in prayer to hear God's voice?
- Has reading the Bible ever revealed something to you in a way that you felt God was speaking directly to you?
- Have you heard the voice of God speak to you? Can you share this with the group?

Other questions covered in Sunday's teaching included:

- How do you live free of shame from sin?
- How do we forgive the unforgivable?
- Is salvation defined as the moment you make the decision for Jesus, or is it a life of following Jesus?
- How do we know our loved ones are in Heaven?
- Do unreached groups of people in the world go the heaven?

**Wrap-Up/Close:**

- Were there questions that you have about faith that weren't answered on Sunday or in this small group meeting?
- Let's commit to living lives that demonstrate our view of God, that we are experiencing the kingdom of God in our lives and evidence of it in us and so that those who are far from God but matter to Him will start looking for the existence of God, and to stay connected to the voice of God through reading the Bible and prayer because there is one God and He can be known.

**Throughout the Week: (Optional)**

- Visit the 12Stone app or [www.12Stone.com/watch](http://www.12Stone.com/watch) to review the questions and answers and read some helpful explanations of faith questions.