



Growth Group Discussion Questions

Series: Facts not Fears

Lesson: The Two B's

Primary Scriptures: Job 21:7-21; Job 42:10-17

Lesson 10 - Week of June 7, 2020

DISCUSSION

Many public schools in the United States promote students to the next grade and graduate them regardless of what they've learned. Data obtained from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows contradictory trends in the areas of graduation rates and long-term academic success. Between the period of 2010-2017, the public high school graduation rates changed from 79 percent to 84 percent, a national increase of 5 percent. Although the graduation rates have increased, the overall academic achievement levels have stalled. Math achievement has plateaued over the past decade and the reading levels have dipped slightly. Currently, only 40 percent of high school graduates are ready for college level reading, and only 25 percent are prepared for college level math. To state this differently or in more simple terms, only 27 percent of students earn a college degree within four years of graduating from high school. We know that every student has a unique combination of strengths and weaknesses, talents, interests, cultural upbringings, and academic history. And in any given academic lesson, students will struggle in different ways. But, if we're honest with the assessment of the data, we could conclude that graduation standards have been lowered; thus stunting students' academic progress and setting them up for failure once they reach the college level. So, why is this important? What does this have to do with "Facts not Fears"? Well, this is merely one example of how standards are modified to address a situation. The results are appealing to those who are positively impacted by the lower standards while others are appalled because they negate the need for people to rise to a standard, no matter how difficult.

Fortunately (or not) for us, God does not operate the same way. He's a master teacher (John 13:13) who does not change or lower His standards. As He works to prepare us for a role in His kingdom, He insists that we learn our lessons properly – even if that means that we must repeatedly face various trials and tribulations. In the book of Job, it was only when Job began coming to grips with the lessons that God wanted him to learn that he began to emerge from his period of great trial. God is only concerned with the bottom line, which is His desire that we become more like Him. In our trials, the promotion rates and pass/fail statistics have no bearings on His goal. And through our trials, we're either going to be **Bitter** or **Better**... "**The Two B's.**"

When facing personal trials and tribulations, life can often seem unfair. Even as Job endured his trial, he was frustrated that he was having so many problems while it appeared that the wicked had it so good (Job 21:7-21). Have you ever had those feelings? Have you ever felt like life was dealing you continuous hands of troubles although you were always working hard to honor God and follow His commandments; always worshipping and praying, reading the Bible, and trying to do right by people; not being perfect but working hard to sin less and loving others the way that God loves you? But still, you find yourself faced with hard financial times, job loss, hurtful or harmful relationships, death of loved ones, physical ailments, and the list goes on and on. Sometimes it would even appear that the more you tried to get closer to God, the more trials and tribulations you faced. While on the other hand, the more your friends and family lived a life of sin, the more they were blessed with all the things you desired. How do you feel? Are you bitter about your situation? Or are you continuing to thank God and work to be an even better person?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Even though it may seem that life is not fair at times, our God is a God of justice. Ultimately, it is in the resurrection that God will reward the righteous and punish the wicked. But God certainly can shift life's events as He chooses. Job's trials and tribulations were described in chapters 1 and 2 in the book of Job. His suffering continued until chapter 42. Job 42:10-15 (MSG) says:¹⁰⁻¹¹ "After Job had interceded for his friends, God restored his fortune—and then doubled it! All his brothers and sisters and friends came to his house and celebrated. They told him how sorry they were and consoled him for all the trouble God had brought him. Each of them brought generous housewarming gifts."¹²⁻

¹⁵ God blessed Job's later life even more than his earlier life. He ended up with fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand teams of oxen, and one thousand donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. He named the first daughter Dove, the second, Cinnamon, and the third, Darkeyes. There was not a woman in that country as beautiful as Job's daughters. Their father treated them as equals with their brothers, providing the same inheritance."

We must trust that our trials and tribulations will produce endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope (Romans 5:3-5). God wants to bless us in an amazing way, but sometimes we need to get out of our own way. Remember, God will never lower His standards. So, be patient, trust the process, and ask God to help you learn the lesson. Allow God to double your blessings.

Fact #1: Don't Justify Yourself To God.

There's no need to talk about everything you've done and how righteous you've been when facing trials and tribulations. Instead, seek to learn the lesson that God aims to teach. (Job 32:1-2)

Fact #2: Seek to KNOW God Instead of Simply Knowing About Him.

The more in tune we are with what God wants specifically for our lives, the easier it will be to emerge from our trials. Don't just read about God, know Him for how He has worked in your life. As a result of your trial, you will become humbler and more compassionate. (Romans 12:2; Jeremiah 9:23-24 and 29:11-13)

Questions:

1. From the following five lessons on Facts Not Fears that we have studied the last few weeks, what key Fact has resonated with you the most?
 - God Knows Everything
 - Faith Under Fire
 - Seek Growth, Not Vindication
 - In the Eye of the Storm
 - The Two B's

Do you have any **Fears** that you now feel that you are better equipped to handle?

2. Our trials will either make us bitter or they can make us better? Going forward, which will you choose? Provide an example of how a specific trial made you bitter. Provide an example of how a specific trial made you better.