

WEEK 8 - What Now?

Faithfulness into the Future

Spring Emphasis 25 // Canopy Guide

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

These questions are great for breaking the ice and getting your group talking. Pick a question or two that fits your group for an all play conversation.

- If there is one thing you wish you could know about the future, what would it be?
- How might you or your family's gifts contribute to a better future, 100 years from now?

WEEK 8 SHORTER PODCAST LINK: [CLICK HERE](#)

This 9 minute podcast is designed to be used in your canopy gathering. The conversation features Roger Turner, Kristen Mudrack, and David Roberts (3 members of our writing team who hold PhDs in philosophy, chemistry, and Bible, respectively). It's a great introduction to our topic as each shares how their continued fields of study give them deeper faith and assurance in God's power to hold the future. The full podcast is linked in the resource section.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Our conversation this week is all about the future. It's a huge topic that may already have your brain running in different directions with a lump growing in the pit of your stomach. The future can feel scary to so many people, and it can produce a visceral reaction that drudges up those feelings of anxiety that we talked about at the very beginning of our semester together. To set the stage for this discussion, we want to unite our thoughts, settle our stomachs, and home in on one big question together: How can we live as faithful followers of Jesus when so much of the future feels uncertain and our culture nudges us to fear what is to come?

As we considered the question, our discipleship team kept coming back to two central things: we know the God who holds the future, and we are a people who walk by faith and by the spirit's work, we bear that fruit of faithfulness.

What is faith? In our culture, the word 'faith' too often means something like "believing in something in spite of (or in opposition to) the evidence." Given this definition, faith is against reason. But, this is a misunderstanding. If this were the right way to understand 'faith', it would follow that God commands his people to follow him without reason, i.e., in spite of reason, or even illogically. But, the whole biblical narrative speaks against this. To see just one example, take the end of John's Gospel: 20:30-31; it says, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in his name." This whole Gospel narrative is given as evidence to provide reasons to believe. This is the opposite of what we would assume if "faith" means that flawed definition.

Faith, in the biblical use of that word, does not mean believing in something in spite of evidence. Rather, the Bible uses "faith" to mean something more like "allegiance", or even "believing loyalty," or the concept of "trust." So, to have faith in Jesus, is to give one's allegiance to Jesus. This is an important point that should guide us as we consider what it means faithfully to follow Jesus with respect to the future. It's a countercultural stance to the fear and anxiety that typically saturates our conversations about the future.

So, in our discussion let's think about what it means to live a life of allegiance to Jesus when it comes to the future in the ways we've mentioned. How might the future look if we reformed our conversations and thoughts to those of faith and faithfulness as we consider the future?

SCRIPTURE TO READ

- Hebrews 11:1-however far you want to go in this chapter
- Romans 12:12
- Choose any of these about the future/end times to reflect on:
 - Matthew 24:1-14/Mark 13:32-37
 - Acts 1:6-8
 - 1 Corinthians 15:50-58
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
 - 1 John 3:1-3

- Revelation 21:1-4

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How can you bolster your faith and calm your fears of the future by reading texts like Hebrews 11? Does taking time to remember God's faithfulness in the past reframe your perspective on the future?
- How is God faithful even when times are tough and we face uncertainty and grief?
- How can you maintain faith as you consider death? Can we have faith even if we hold it in tension with doubt and uncertainty?
- What fruit have you seen come from our conversations this semester? How have you found ways to better integrate the Big Story of Scripture with the pressing question of "What Now?"

RESOURCES

These resources are great for leader prep and for group member follow up if you're interested in learning more on the topic today.

- Full Podcast Episode:
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/0d60cWgt4K3o25nTDDhCMS> This 26 minute full podcast episode captures a beautiful conversation between Roger Turner (PhD in Philosophy), Kristen Mudrack (PhD in Chemistry), and David Roberts (PhD in Bible) as they talk about their faith in our God who holds the future. As each of them study in their respective fields, they've learned to dig deeper and ask more questions, finding all along the way the beauty and power of the God who created the world.
- Bible Project - [Does the Bible Predict the End of the World?](#)