

## Do I REALLY believe?

It's already been a long road since we started at the beginning of this year, but it all ties together into one thought. The difficulty is really language...we get lost in it! God has made language so robust that many words are used for the same idea, but each one can explore and reveal different aspects of it. Over time it can get confusing if all you are doing is memorizing rather than learning the concepts - understanding the 'whats' and 'whys'.

Once you have a firm grasp of the concepts at hand, most of the words used to explain or even talk about them become super easy to identify. You begin to anticipate where scripture is going with a topic before you even finish reading it because you understand the concept and its purpose.

If you remember, in the beginning of the year, the Lord brought me in contact with a few teachings of Francis Chan. I loved his passion and his convictions - admittedly, this was mostly because we shared the same views.

This led me down a pathway of teaching the lessons we've covered this year. I began by attempting to stir a REAL awareness that Jesus is actually and literally '[In Our Midst](#)' scrutinizing our lives as either conforming to or failing to conform to His words.

We learned about the meaning and nature of our church gatherings -that they have and serve a real and valuable purpose which cannot be supplanted or replaced by "Bible study" or "Church on TV" from home.

We talked about the purpose of our redemption from God's eyes rather than ours. That it was to create awareness...pulling us out of the sleep of darkness and into agreement with His ways and thoughts, so that we can walk together with Him in peace - free from the shackles of sin. In fact, THAT IS what worship is!!!

All of these things are just different ways of approaching **the only real topic of the Christian faith** and that is forming Christ in people.

This is where we began to talk about suffering, because the glory of Christ being formed in us is VERY CLEARLY tied in scripture to suffering, which will only happen in the hearts of those who literally love Him with all their hearts. ALL OTHER HEARTS have limitations to their love and so draw the line of *how much they are willing to suffer* somewhere south of Christ being formed in them.

The following include both questions and thoughts I want you to prayerfully think through. THIS IS NOT a speed test - it isn't a test at all!

PLEASE TAKE THE TIME NECESSARY!!!!

The goal of this exercise is to get **you to think** through what you have already been taught. NOT just to get right answers to questions, but to arrive at the comprehension of God's work in you.

Everything we've been covering is doing nothing more than pulling the covers off of our heads so we can see the truth of reality. Reality means that which is truly real. So, all that we have been learning since the beginning of this year has everything to do with REALITY for a Christian.

What is life about - what does it mean to be God's child - what are God's intentions for you?

God has been busy since creation, molding mankind into something He desires. We are now at the end of the age and God's purposes are ALL focused upon His church - and you are part of that body. Understanding these things is EVERYTHING!

So dig in and be serious in your approach to these thoughts and questions.

In the end, I want you to grasp the panorama of what God is doing in His body and in you in particular, SO THAT you can be deliberate in cooperating with His redemptive plan in you.

Key passages we've covered which touch on these topics:

- **2Cor. 4:6-11** - Suffering, Jesus formed in us
- **Ephesians 1:1-11** - holy, blameless, in Christ, Created for good works
- **Ephesians 1:19-22** - Temple, tabernacle, dwelling place
- **Phil. 3:7-14** - Knowing Him, faith, maturity in Christ
- **James 1:2-4** - Trials
- **James 1:12-18** - Temptations, life
- **James 2:18&20** - Faith, works
- **1Peter 1:6-9** - Trials, soul salvation, faith
- **1Peter 4:12-19** - Trials, glory, Christian suffering
- **Heb. 10:13** - Temptations
- **Heb. 10:35-39** - Need for faith, patience, life
- **Heb. 12:1-14** - sin, weights, maturity, chastening, righteousness, holiness

One message which touched on MUCH of these things was ['Suffering...who for the Joy'](#).

### **Thoughts & Questions:**

Explain your understanding of the nature and purpose of suffering.

Make the most complete list you are able to, of scriptural synonyms for suffering.

Why is agreement with God so important?

What is Life and why does God want that WITH you?

What does it mean that you and I are God's temple?

What does it mean when the scriptures tell you that you are being prepared TO BE a dwelling place for God in the spirit forever?

What is testing?

What is the difference between tests, trials and temptations?

What is the PURPOSE of tests?

What is the PURPOSE of trials?

What is the PURPOSE of temptations?

What part does the original fall of man play in all of this?

What does all of this have to do with God's intentions for us in eternity?

If you were going to have to explain the role suffering plays in forming Christ in you to a Sunday School of 6th graders...how would you explain it?

What questions do you suppose they might ask?

How would you answer those questions?

What is the difference between the body, soul and spirit?

Describe how the Bible explains the salvation AND the timing of salvation for each of these. [Body - Soul - Spirit]

What is a pure heart?

What does that have to do with Loving God with all of your heart?

What is holiness?

Write down a list of synonyms for holiness.

What does holiness have to do with a pure heart?

What are some other ways of saying 'soul salvation'?

(Example: Christ in you)

What does faith have to do with the salvation of our souls?

**What** are you believing?

**Why** are you believing it?

The scriptures tell us that we are to lay aside every weight and the sin that does so easily thwart our progress in Christ.

Describe the difference between a weight and a sin.

I imagine you are quite familiar with your sins, but I want you to spend a little time thinking and praying through what are the things which serve as weights in your life that slow down or put an absolute stop to your progress in Christ.

What are you doing **ON PURPOSE** to address your sins and weights?

Are you actively believing God regarding Christ being formed in you?

Get before God and get a game plan to address these things and make it difficult to slip back into inactivity.