

Gathering Guide

for Communities and Friends

Exit Interviews: Responding to Marty Sampson, November 10, 2019

The Big Idea

It is not uncommon for even seasoned Christians to experience some form of doubt in their lives. Just taking a glance around our world we are confronted with so many questions. Where did we come from? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why would God permit earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, cancer, Alzheimer's? In the midst of these difficult questions we must decide if we believe in a loving, all-powerful God who is worthy of our worship and devotion. It is doubtful we will ever have all our questions answered, but that

Where we are in the Bible

We will be looking at I Corinthians 13 this week. This is a very interesting passage as the Apostle Paul seems to interrupt his discussion on spiritual gifts to interject his thoughts on the priority of love! And then as the chapter draws to a conclusion Paul speaks of the limits to our gifts and even our knowledge during our time in this world. In verse 9 he notes that our current knowledge is limited and illustrates his point in verse 12 by comparing our current knowledge to a poor reflection in a mirror. It is a reminder to us today that we cannot comprehend and know God completely in this life. His ways are not our ways and any attempt to fully grasp an ungraspable God will fall short.

Other scriptures to consider

Isaiah 55:8-9

God's thoughts and actions

Romans 11:33-36

The Glory of God

I Corinthians 2:11-16

The mind of Christ

Finding a bit of ourselves

- What experiences have you had when God was especially real to you? What experiences have created doubt? What have you learned from those experiences?
- Where would you place yourself on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 representing very few doubts and 10 representing unbelief? Why did you give yourself this ranking?
- If the choice were yours, what would you prefer; conclusive proof of God or an intimate relationship with him? Explain your answer.
- What evidences of God do you find to be most compelling and encouraging in your faith?

Where do we go from here?

- Can our doubts be productive? How might your doubts spur you on to grow in your faith?
- Think of someone you know who is struggling in their faith. What could you do to be an encouragement to them?
- Here are additional recommended resources if you would like to go deeper:

Generation Ex-Christian (Drew Dyck)

If I Really Believe, Why Do I Have These Doubts? (Dr. Lynn Anderson)

The Case for Faith and *The Case for Christ* (Lee Strobel)

The Reason for God and *Making Sense of God* (Timothy Keller)

Disappointment with God (Phillip Keller)

The Rise of the Nones (James Emery White)



friends church
Willoughby Hills

Prayer focus

As you reflect on who have walked away from their Christian faith or experiencing enormous doubt, pray for:

- Release of Anger you may feel toward that person
- Compassion toward them and empathy for the pain they experiencing
- Hope for their restoration and return to faith in Jesus