

OUTLINE & QUESTIONS

THIS JESUS THING JUST ISN'T WORKING FOR ME

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MARK 9:14-29

Experiencing Deconstruction (Mark 9:14-18)

Engaging Deconstruction (Mark 9:19-29)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY, FRIENDS & GROUPS

Icebreaker: Share a high and a low from this week.

1. Read Mark 9:14-29 out loud. Have your group spend 3-4 minutes in silence to mark up their observations and questions. Go around the group and share your observations and discuss them.
2. In Mark 9:19 Jesus says "You unbelieving generation...how long shall I put up with you?" Who is Jesus frustrated with? Why?
3. Why is it important to be able to say both halves of the father's statement, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (9:24)?
4. Has there been a season in your spiritual journey of significant doubt or wrestling? What are/were some of the questions that trouble(d) you?
5. What is the difference between doubt, deconstruction, and deconversion? Why is it helpful to have three categories?
6. Why is deconstruction so disorienting for people?
7. Pastor Clayton talked about the gap between expectations and experience. Why is that gap a source of doubt?
8. Pastor Clayton gave three examples of gaps that lead people into deconstruction (rigid faith vs. complexity; therapeutic faith vs. suffering; idealistic faith vs. actual Christians). Have you wrestled with any of these gaps? Is there another you've experienced?
9. The father is brutally honest about his unbelief while still asking for help. How can you practice this kind of honest doubt without sliding into hopeless cynicism?
10. Deconstruction never leaves you where you started. Of the three possible outcomes, what can you do to end up renewing your faith, rather than replacing or remixing it?
10. In the sermon, Pastor Clayton talked about the different ways kids ask, "Why?" How does this illustrate how we should handle our doubts and how God responds?
11. What would it look like for you to "wrestle with God hoping to lose" this week? What specific doubt or question will you bring directly to God in prayer rather than just thinking about it?

Prayer Prompt: Think of someone you know who is experiencing a crisis of faith or who has walked away. Pray for them by name, asking God to meet them with compassion, guide them to the truth, and help them find solid ground. If you're in that place, you can pray for yourself.