

GROUP DISCUSSION

Questions for facilitating dynamic discussion

Too Good to Be True?

October 15, 2023

Week 6: Then why does God send people to hell?

Luke 18:9-14

The Bible declares that God's goodness exceeds our wildest dreams. Yet skeptics have a list of reasons why it can't be true. Rather than ignore their arguments, let's have honest and courageous conversations about life's hardest questions. This week, we're talking about different spiritual paths and why God doesn't let everyone spend eternity in Heaven.

Kicking It Off: This series has helped us gain answers to some really tough questions. Which one resonated the most with you? Along those lines, if you could ask God any question, what would it be?

Discussion:

1. Jeff discussed an early Baha'i member's belief that everyone can get to Heaven, no matter which spiritual route they want to take. What do you think of this idea that faith is like a journey up a big mountain, and eventually we all arrive at the same spot? What makes that idea so popular?
2. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9. What do these verses teach us about the claims that Jesus is the only route to God? And what do you think of that idea?

God will bring "... judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power."

3. What's so significant about this phrase "those who refuse to obey the good News ..."? What happens to them, according to this verse above?
4. In light of Luke 18:9-14, what did Jeff explain about the Pharisees' religious practices from the Jewish culture of the ancient world? Who does that sound like in our current day and age? How did the Pharisees compare to the tax collectors of Jesus' day, and what was their initial outcome?

"I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." (Luke 18:14)

5. What do self-righteous, works-based religions try to do? What is the problem with self-sufficiency, in light of what Jesus accomplished on the cross? When are you tempted to rely on your own strength?
6. How does Ephesians 2:8-9 help us understand God's merciful "elevator" plan for salvation, vs. a "stairs-based" (hard self-effort) way to get to Heaven?

"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it."

Wrapping Up: There's a sobering reality that not everyone will choose to follow Jesus and find saving faith. Pray for your group members to have a spirit of humility, asking God for His eternal rescue through Jesus — and to invite others to do the same.