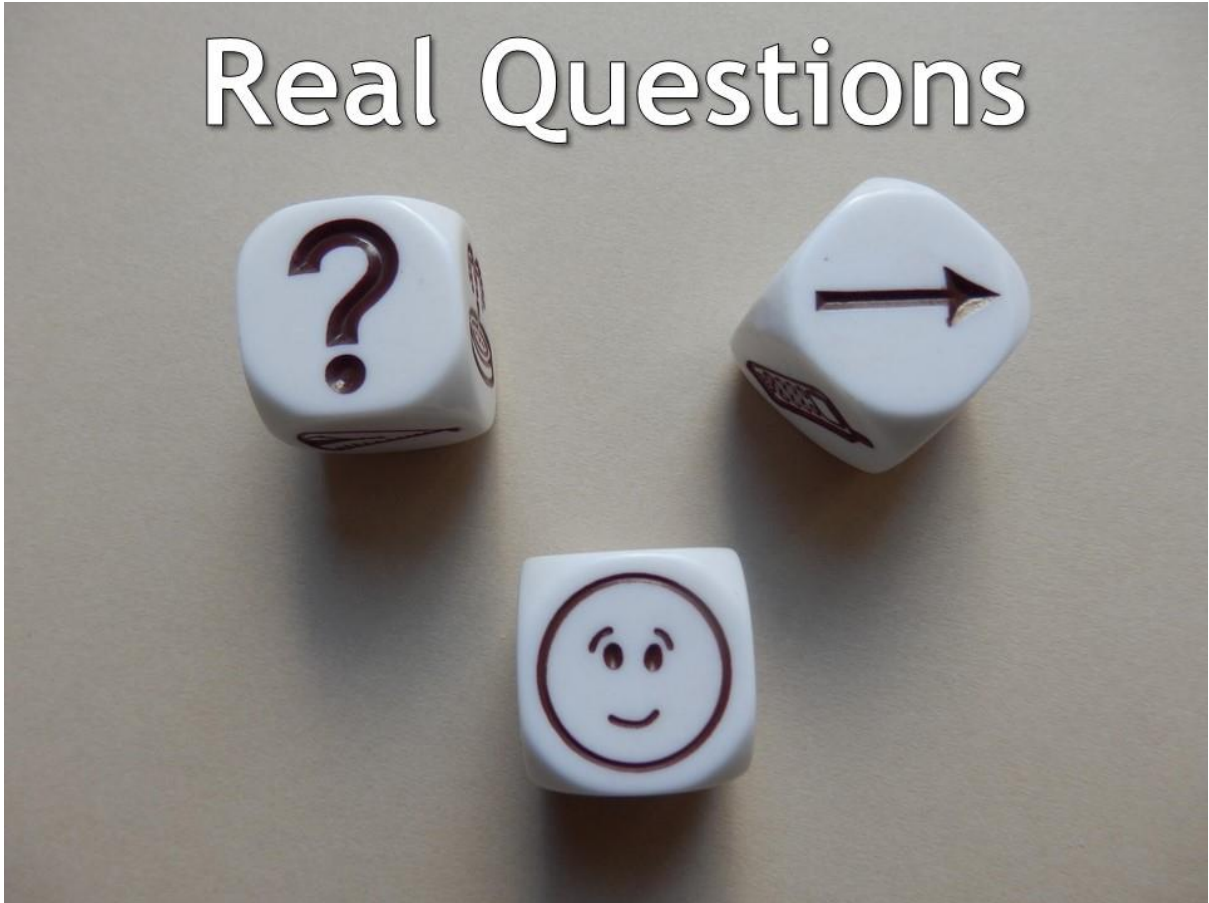


# Real Questions



## Life Group Study Guide

## Introduction

This series on 'Real Questions' looks at some of the parables and teachings of Jesus, and how they prompt us to look at our own response to God. All of us have real questions about God, but are there any real answers?

The sermons are designed to be 'evangelistic', for people who are considering Jesus and whether they should follow him. These studies for Life Groups may help you in reflecting on people's questions, and exploring them together in a deeper way than is possible on a Sunday morning.

Because these Bible readings are parables and stories, they are meant to be listened to primarily for how **we** fit into the story, and to take the meaning of the parable as a whole rather than breaking it up into individual verses. For that reason, you might want to study the parables in two ways: either work through the questions on the following pages, or do a more reflective study with the following steps:

1. Read through the passage in the group slowly several times.
2. Each member identifies a particular person in the parable or a particular point that they identify with.
3. Ask each other how this might help you to answer the question that heads each study.
4. What should you do in response to this message?
5. Pray that God would give you the wisdom and courage to put this into practice, or to find answers to your questions.

# Do I Need God?

## Luke 14:15-24

1. Do you feel as though you need God? Why/why not?
2. What is the 'banquet' or 'feast' that Jesus is talking about?
3. Who do you think the intended audience of the parable is? (look at 14:1-14).
4. Why do you think that the people in the parable were unwilling to come to the master's banquet?
5. What excuses did the three invitees offer?
6. Are they valid excuses for not accepting an offer to a great party?
7. Can you think of any contemporary versions of the same excuses (eg. what would be our version of buying 'five yoke of oxen')?
8. What is the master's response to the refusal of his invitation? What does this tell us about his character?
9. What are the consequences of refusing the invitation (v24)?
10. Do you offer any excuses to God as to why you won't respond to his invitation to know him?

## What Will it Cost Me to Follow God?

### Luke 14:25-33

1. Think of something that you have sacrificed a great deal to achieve. How did you come to the decision that it was worth it?
2. Why did Jesus offer such an 'off-putting' description of what it meant to follow him and be his disciple?
3. What particular types of sacrifice and suffering does Jesus ask his disciples to accept?
4. How do you feel about his demand that those who follow him must 'hate' their families (v26)? What does this mean?
5. What does it mean to 'carry your cross' (v27)?
6. Is it realistic for Jesus to ask people to 'give up everything that you have' in order to follow him?
7. Which of these three sacrifices is the most difficult for you to contemplate?
8. What could Jesus have to offer that would make these sacrifices worthwhile? Do you agree that it is worthwhile?
9. What about those Christians who have not given up everything to follow Jesus? Can we still call ourselves 'disciples' of Jesus?
10. What is Jesus asking you to give up today in order to follow him?

## Would God Want Me?

### Luke 15:11-32

1. What image would you use to describe God as you have experienced him?
2. Pick 2-3 members of the group to retell the story to the group in their own words.
3. Who are the characters in this story? Describe their personalities and the decisions that they made.
4. What was the 'turning point' for the younger son in his journey away from his father?
5. Did the father react to his son's return in the way that you would expect?
6. What was the complaint of the older son? Does he have a point? How do you think that he would respond to his father's words in vv31-32?
7. Which of the two sons do you most resemble (in your general life and in your relationship to God)? Are you the 'good son' or the 'wild son'?
8. Do you believe that God will accept you regardless of whatever you have done? If not, what stops you from believing this?
9. Do you resent God showing grace to people who are less deserving?
10. How is God asking you to respond to his love at the moment?

# How Do I Get Right With God?

## Luke 18:9-14

*Reading note: A 'Pharisee' was a member of a strict religious group in Jesus's time known for their attempts to keep the Law of God completely. Tax collectors were Jewish people who collaborated with the Roman government to take large sums of money from their own people, in return for getting rich themselves.*

1. Do you believe that you are 'right with God' at the moment?  
What do you base that belief on?
2. According to verse 9, what kind of people need to learn more about 'getting right' with God?
3. What are the differences between how the Pharisee and the tax collector approached their visit to temple to pray?
4. What did the Pharisee pray? What did the tax collector pray?
5. Is there any benefit in striving for moral and religious achievement (such as fasting, giving generously) in our relationship with God?
6. Why did the tax collector go home 'justified before God' rather than the Pharisee?
7. Which of these two men do you identify with more strongly?
8. How can you be sure that you are 'right with God'? Is there anything that you are going to do with that knowledge at the moment?