



Group Life Leader's Discussion Guide

Date: 3/9/2025

Sermon Title: Wrestling with Doubt Week 1 – Is there a God?

Scripture: Psalm 8:3-4; Psalm 19:1-2

Gathering:

As you gather with one another be sure to greet each other and check-in. For groups meeting for the first time be sure to start with introductions and ask a question to get to know each other better. Example you could ask how long have you been attending and part of FUMCR?

OPENING PRAYER (Group leader or someone prays this prayer to open or create a similar prayer.)

Gracious God, as we gather, open our hearts and minds to explore faith with honesty and courage. As we begin this journey today with one another we acknowledge you are present always with us. May we find you in the beauty of creation and the testimony of our lives. Amen.

Opening Question:

1. What sparked your interest or what are you most curious about when it comes to this study or this journey of lent in exploring doubt?
2. How has your personal experience with doubt shaped your faith journey? In what ways have you wrestled with doubt and found it to be a catalyst for growth?

Digging into the scripture text:

3. Psalm 8:3-4 reflects on the vastness of the heavens and asks, "What are human beings that you are mindful of them?" How does the grandeur of the universe make you think about the existence of God? Have you ever had a Psalm 8 moment?
4. The psalmist marvels that God, who created the moon and the stars, still cares for humanity. How does the idea that an all-powerful Creator values each person impact your understanding of faith and purpose?
5. How does creation point to the existence of God? Where have you seen the natural creation point to a creator and existence of God?
6. What role does personal experience and reason play in belief?

Sermon Questions:

7. Pastor Clayton mentioned that 52% of US adults and teens have expressed doubts about their faith. Does this statistic surprise you? Why or why not?
8. Have you found science conflicting with your faith, or have you had a different experience? Explain?
9. How do you respond to Stephen Hawking's statement that "science makes God unnecessary"? Do you agree or disagree, and why?

10. What do you do with the idea that earth is billions of years old, but the bible literalist sees and believe it differently. What has been your path and journey in making sense of science and faith?
11. Reflect on the Grand Canyon example from the sermon. How does the vastness of time and the intricacy of nature's processes affect your view of God?
12. Pastor Clayton shared a personal "Psalm 8 moment" from his youth. Have you ever had a similar experience of awe and wonder that connected you to God? Describe it.

Insights from *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith* chapter 1:

13. Chapter 1 deals with faith and science and Rev. Hamilton explores these topics and questions. Have you found it easy or hard to embrace the truth of science as well as the faith of God at work? What has helped or hindered your journey?
14. On page 18 Rev. Hamilton writes, "*Do I choose to believe in a universe that is self-created, who's laws are self-created, where life is order out of nothing, or do I choose to believe in a universe that is an expression of the power, beauty, and will of a God whose origins I cannot explain? Both require a measure of faith.*" What are your thoughts on the point Rev. Hamilton is making about faith and science? Is this helpful
15. If you have read chapter 1 of *Wrestling with Doubt*, what did you find helpful, troubling, or new for you? Explain.

Explore more if you have time:

16. Read Romans 1:20 How do you see evidence of God in the natural world? Can you think of examples where creation points to a Creator? Do you ever feel compelled to prove to others that there is a God?
17. Read Acts 17:24-28 How does this passage challenge the idea that God is distant or nonexistent? Have you ever experienced a moment in life where you felt God's presence in a personal way or distant?

Applying it:

18. How can we create spaces in our FUMCR community where it's truly 'okay to have doubts' without judgment?
19. In what ways can we show God's love through action to those who have doubts or don't believe?
20. We are called to show God's love through action rather than trying to prove God's existence. How can we embody this approach in our interactions with those who have doubts?

CLOSING PRAYER (at the end of discussion have folks share any prayer requests or praises and have someone close in prayer, you can use this prayer if you desire.)

Pray: Creator God, thank you for the wonder of the universe. Strengthen our faith and help us recognize your presence in all of life. Go with us now as we journey through this season of Lent. May we encounter you and recognize you in all we do this week. Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND (or challenges for you this week)

1. Identify someone in your life who is struggling with faith or doesn't believe. Plan a specific way to show them God's love through action this week.
2. Take a mindful walk in nature, paying attention to the intricate details and vast beauty. Reflect on how this experience impacts your view of God as creator.