

Life-Giving Words

John 6:67-71

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Sticks X Stones

Reflect

Outline: Recap

Realize

Points to Ponder

Respond

Questions to draw out understanding.

REFLECT

We've all got those friends who are super blunt and say the things we were thinking about but didn't verbalize. Jesus is kind of like this, but often he asks questions instead—the kinds of questions that get us to say those things that are on our minds and reveal what's truly going on in our hearts. When we let God's words to us (including his questions) hit our hearts, we open ourselves up to greater depth with God than we've ever known before...and to the abundant life Jesus promised us.

[LINK to SMALL GROUP VIDEO MATERIALS](#)

REALIZE

1. God often speaks in questions.

- **John 6:67-68**
- **Leader Notes**
 - We can speak life or death in the way we use our words, and it's all in the approach and intent we employ. Constructive feedback can be life-giving, even if we are challenging someone. But negative comments tear down people and their work. Even though Jesus was always honest, sometimes even blunt, in the way he challenged people, his words were always life-giving.
 - We see from this passage that God often speaks in questions. That's because he's a good parent. If you've ever had a faithful parent or mentor ask you a really good question, you'll notice that you learn more about yourself as you're answering the question.
 - Unlike how we so often function, Jesus wants more than just outward behavior change. His hard questions surface our heart motives and lead us to heart change.
- **Think back to a time when you were certain God gave you a directive or asked you a question. How did He communicate that to you, and what did you do? What did that experience surface in your heart?**

2. God creates in you a hunger for Him.

- **John 6:68-69**
- **Leader Notes**
 - Jesus knew that in Peter's heart his mind was already made up. He knew Peter even better than Peter knew himself. Jesus's great love for us allows him to lean in to the difficult questions, to reveal to us the truth of our reality from his perspective.

- We don't fall out of love with our spouses, and we don't fall out of love with God. We fall out of repentance, the practice of humbling ourselves and reminding ourselves of who our lover is, whether that is our spouse or the Lord himself.
- Repentance is not shame — that's a tactic of the enemy to actually isolate us from the people and God who love us most. In fact repentance counteracts shame, and one of the biggest parts of repentance is confessing our sins to God, and to believers whom we trust. Confession defeats shame and brings us closer to God and others.
- **How long have you been in an intimate relationship with Jesus? Has your love for Him grown during this time? Have you sensed a growing hunger for His Word? Is there anything you need to bring to the Lord and a trusted friend in confession and repentance?**

3. Only God knows what's really in your heart.

- **John 6:70-71**
- **Leader Notes**
 - Jesus' questions are precise and surgical, even to Judas himself. He always gives us a chance to do things differently, and the choice is ours.
 - Sometimes there are sins that we are trying to keep secret, but that still is a barrier between us and God even if no other people know about it. If only God knows what's in our hearts, one of two things is going to happen. For the pure in heart, God knows that you are seeking deep, inward change, not just outward conformity. This delights God, and you probably don't experience any fear about God knowing your heart — you have nothing to hide! If you have a hard heart, and only the Lord knows why, that's a terrifying place to be. The secrets of our hearts come out sideways, and we end up hurting God and others. It's a betrayal.
 - Thankfully, the very "words of eternal life" Peter mentions are the reason we can come to the Lord in repentance at any time and experience his forgiveness and redemption. The words of eternal life are simply that we know God the Father through God the Son (John 17:3). We are all sinners, and God saves sinners. It's as simple as that.
- **Does the idea of God knowing every thought and hidden motive in your heart bring peace to you? Why or why not? How can you arrive at a place where you find peace in hiding nothing from Him?**

Optional Follow-up Questions:

- What makes you say that?
- How do you feel about that?
- How would you explain your answer to a non-Christian friend or neighbor?
- Why did God design it to work that way? Why not just do (whatever else) instead?
- What would you say to someone who disagrees with that?
- Why do we really have to do it like that? Why can't we just go (some other route) instead?

Read through the Bible with us and memorize weekly Bible verses at crossroadschurch.net/readingplan.