

GODQUEST

Why GodQuest?

In the midst of today's spiritual confusion, what we need is a fresh voice of truth. Harvest Church invites you to go on a GodQuest! In this study we will be presenting six 'signposts' that will guide you along on your spiritual journey. These signposts include powerful truths and compelling evidence on the topics of God, creation, the Bible, the identity of Jesus, the problem of suffering, and the path to heaven. GodQuest will help you explore the truths of Christianity in a way that is intriguing, relevant, and easy to understand.

GodQuest is an integrated series that includes Sunday Morning Teaching, Life Group discussion questions (perspectives) as well as a Daily Devotional (Daily Travel Log).

Thanks for joining Harvest Church for GodQuest.

Dave, for the elders

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

We all have stories of getting lost. Getting lost can teach us how important it is to follow signposts and to know where we are going. This is true for a natural destination as well as a spiritual one. What we believe affects the choices we make, the path we take in life and our ultimate destination. We invite you to join us on this God Quest to discover the God your heart is searching for.

Join us each week at Harvest Church as we un-package this journey. Follow along in this booklet with the preaching on Sunday and in your Life Group. We will be going over the signposts that will lead you to a closer walk with God and a clearer understanding of who He is. We encourage you to engage in your Life Group on each signpost to gain a clearer understanding and help you reach your destination.

Perspectives

GodQuest is much more than a Sunday AM series. The questions under the 'Perspectives' section of this booklet will be discussed during LifeGroups each week. If you're not involved in a LifeGroup, please take this opportunity to attend one for the six weeks of GodQuest. Information on LifeGroups can be found in the Church lobby, **in the back of this booklet**, as well as our web site, hci-tyler.org.

Daily Travel Log (Monday – Friday)

To get the most out of your spiritual Journey we have provided these Daily Travel Logs for your personal devotions. The Travel Logs have interesting facts, questions, activities, and short biographies. The last Travel Log for the week is a reflection from your journey. In this Travel Log you will spend time thinking about what you have learned and then reflect on your own spiritual search.

Prayer and Ministry

It is our deep conviction that sanctification can only occur as a direct result of the Holy Spirit working in the life of the believer. Jesus came to model a Spirit-filled life. We cannot do it alone. We trust that not only will these questions cause you to ponder and hear others' views, but that it will drive you to pray for the help of the Holy Spirit as He comes to take what is Jesus' and make it yours. Please be open to ministering to each other and allowing the Holy Spirit to reshape your life and doctrine.

Week 1

The Quest:

“What you believe determines where you go in life.”

John 14:1-6

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." NIV

Observations

I can know that TRUTH EXISTS.

I can know THE TRUTH.

I can live in RELATIONSHIP with the Truth.

Daily Travel Log

Monday:

Proverbs 23:19 “Listen, my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path.” NIV

- Spend some time thinking about the course of your life. In particular, think about the times when you made an important decision or something big happened.
- How did your view of God affect your choices or your response to those events in your life?

Tuesday:

Read Galatians 5:7-10.

- When it comes to your spiritual beliefs, are you influenced by others or are you the influencer?
- How can you influence others or stand firm in your beliefs this week?

Wednesday:

Profile – C.S. Lewis.

C.S. Lewis, who lived from 1898-1963, was a brilliant teacher, author, and apologist (someone who defends the Christian faith). You might know him as the author of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe; Prince Caspian;* and the rest of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. But if you read about the first part of his life, you might be surprised that he became such a staunch defender of the Christian faith. Although he grew up in a family with Christian beliefs, at fifteen Lewis turned away from his childhood faith and became an atheist. He was very intelligent, and when he became an adult, he pursued academic interests, attending prestigious Oxford University and then teaching at both Oxford and Cambridge.

Even as a professed atheist, Lewis' curiosity and intellect caused him to seek the truth about God. He was drawn to God yet resistant to surrendering control of his life to an all-powerful Lord. In *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis' story of his own life, he wrote, “A young man who wishes to remain a sound atheist cannot be too careful of his reading. There are traps everywhere...God is, if I may say it, very unscrupulous.” He continued to be drawn toward God, and in his book, Lewis described how he finally succumbed to God's pursuit: “Night after night [I felt], whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and

admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England.”

- Lewis describes himself as a “reluctant convert”. What were some of the reasons you had for resisting God?
- Have you ever been reluctant to search for God or to give Him control of your life?
- What were your reasons, and how did that reluctance impact your life?
- Are you still resisting God and avoiding a relationship with Him?

Thursday:

“The Road Not Taken” Robert Frost, 1920:

TWO roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

- When you are faced with difficult choices in life, what are the things that influence your decision making?

- Is there a choice you've made in your life that you wish you could take back? How would you choose differently?

Friday:

This week's Journey:

- As you think back over this week's journey, what made the biggest impression on you? Why?
- List some adjectives that best describe your current relationship with God (for example: comforting, growing, inconsistent, powerful, nonexistent, loving, etc.).
- If you don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ, you can start one today. Talk to your Life Group leader this week about accepting Christ into your life. (see page #__ for a list of Life Groups)

Week 2

The Beginning:

“What you believe about creation determines how you view yourself and life”

Psalm 19:1-4

“The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard. Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world.” NLT

Observations

I can see signs of God’s EXISTENCE in creation.

I can see signs of God’s INTELLIGENCE in creation.

I can see signs of God’s CARE in creation.

Daily Travel Log

Monday:

Job 38:4-5 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much. 5 Who determined its dimensions and stretched out the surveying line?" NLT

Isaiah 40:12 "Who else has held the oceans in his hand? Who has measured off the heavens with his fingers? Who else knows the weight of the earth or has weighed the mountains and hills on a scale?" NLT

How big is 'our' galaxy? "I Don't Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist" by Frank Turek & Norman Geisler. There are 100 billion stars in our galaxy, and the average distance between those stars is 30 trillion miles. How far is 30 trillion miles? Let's put it this way; when the Space Shuttle is in orbit it travels at about 17,000 mph – almost five miles per second. If you could get in the Space Shuttle and speed through space at 5 miles per second, it would take you 201,450 years to travel 30 trillion miles! If you started your journey at the time of Christ you would only be one-hundredth of the way there right now.) Keep in mind there are 100 billion stars in our galaxy.

- What does it mean to you to have a Creator who is responsible for such an astonishing universe?

Tuesday:

Christians hold to different views regarding the age of the earth, but all three of the views listed here share the following beliefs:

1. God created the universe.
2. The Bible is the complete true Word of God.
3. Our knowledge of God and His ways is incomplete.

Young-Earth Creationism: This is the view that God created the universe approximately six to ten thousand years ago in a period of six literal twenty-four hour days. Young-Earth creationists interpret the creation account in Genesis 1 & 2 literally.

Old-Earth Creationism: Also known as progressive creationism, this view is that God created the universe ten to fifteen billion years ago. While the Bible doesn't give us the age of the earth or the universe, it does tell us that time is different for God than for us.

Theistic Evolution: In a nutshell, theistic evolutionists believe that God created human beings by means of evolution and natural selection.

Although they believe the Bible is true, they interpret the creation accounts in the Bible in a figurative rather than literal way.

- Which of these views is closest to your own beliefs?
- Why do you think that view is the explanation for creation?

Wednesday:

Job 39: 26-27 "Is it your wisdom that makes the hawk soar and spread its wings toward the south? Is it at your command that the eagle rises to the heights to make its nest?" NLT

Every autumn, beautiful monarch butterflies migrate from their northern homes to warmer areas in Southern California and Mexico. They travel approximately twenty-five hundred miles for up to two months, and they not only migrate to the same area each year – they actually migrate to the same trees. What's even more amazing is that the migrating butterflies have never been to the areas to which they are traveling. Each year, there are four generations of butterflies. Three of the generations live about two months. The other generation lives for six to eight months, and these are the ones that migrate. They're 'returning' to trees last visited by monarch butterflies three generations back.

- Scientists have not been able to explain the migration habits of monarch butterflies, as well as other species, other than to say it is by instinct.
- The big question is: What or Who designed these migratory animals with such amazing instincts?
- How does Job explain migration?
- Want More? "Watch Amazing Journeys-IMAX" at IMAX.com

Thursday:

Romans 1:20 "For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God." NLT

Job 39:19-21 "Have you given the horse its strength or clothed its neck with a flowing mane? Did you give it the ability to leap like a locust? Its majestic snorting is terrifying! It paws the earth and rejoices in its strength when it charges out to battle." NLT

- If God created the universe and the unique, intricate life within it, then what does creation reveal about God? Who He is, and what He is like?

Friday:

This week's Journey

- As you think back over this week's journey, what made the biggest impression on you? Why?
- In what ways do your beliefs about creation affect how you view yourself and how you view life?
- How does that impact some of the major issues of our time?

- If you don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ, talk to your Life Group leader about how to invite Jesus into your life.

Week 3

The Word – “What you believe about the Bible determines how you live.”

John 20:31

“But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” NIV

Observations

I can BELIEVE that the Bible was RECORDED faithfully.

I can be CONFIDENT that the Bible was RELAYED accurately.

I can be GRATEFUL that the Bible has been REINFORCED externally.

Daily Travel Log

Monday:

Facts about the Dead Sea Scrolls:

1. They were discovered in 1947, shortly after World War II.
 2. There are more than nine hundred texts, including fragments of every book of the bible except Esther.
 3. In 1954, some of the scrolls were advertised for sale in "The Wall Street Journal." The ad read, "The Four Dead Sea Scrolls: Biblical manuscripts dating back to at least 200 BC are for sale. This would be an ideal gift to an educational or religious institution by an individual or group. Box F206."
 4. When scholars compared the texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls to our current Bible, they found textual differences of less than 5%. The majority of the differences are the equivalent of a "typo" in that they are slight spelling differences. (for more information, see www.bibleplaces.com/qumran.htm)
- How do the facts regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls affect your view of the Bible?
 - Has anyone you know ever challenged the accuracy of the Bible by saying that the text has been altered over time? How could you use the information about the Dead Sea Scrolls to answer that person?

Tuesday:

What we believe directly affects our decisions. You can test this by thinking about what you would do in certain situations if you believed the Bible and what you would do if you didn't.

Situation	The Word	Believe the Bible	Don't Believe
Your boyfriend (or girlfriend) wants to "move forward" in your relationship by having sex and moving in together.	Eph 5:3 Col 3:5 1Thess 4:3-5		
You are having a hard time bringing your tithe to your local church. Your budget is tight, and you need to replace your car in the next few months.	Luke 16:13 Mal 3:10 2 Cor 9:7		
A teenage girl you know becomes pregnant. She's an excellent student and planning to go to college. She is considering having an abortion, and she asks your advice.	Jer 1:5 Ps 139:13-16		

<p>A close friend is going through a difficult time, and you allow him to stay at your home for a while. Later, you realize your friend used your ATM and PIN to take money from your savings account.</p>	<p>Colossians 3:13 Matthew 6:14-16</p>		
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Wednesday:

Profile – King David

He was the shepherd-king, the songwriter and musician, the mighty warrior God described as a “man after God’s own heart” (1 Sam 16:14). Historians place David’s reign at about 1000 BC. When the prophet Samuel carried out God’s direction to anoint him as king, David was just a teenager, with “beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance” (1 Sam 16:12 NASB). Throughout his life, David was a leader with unwavering faith and a courageous heart, but he was also a man who fell prey to temptation. He was inspiring, heroic, and very human.

Now, three thousand years separate us from Israel’s famed King David. Some people believe King David is just a legendary character, no more real than King Arthur. But the scriptures record the details of his life and writings in no fewer than six Old Testament books. Fact or fantasy – which is King David, and how can we know?

In 1993 and 1994, archaeologists working at Tel Dan, the remains of an ancient city in northern Israel, discovered two stone fragments that date to sometime between 841-798 BC. The fragments, referred to the Tel Dan Stele, contained an inscription from an Aramaic king who brags of his military conquests: “I killed Jaram son of Ahab king of Israel, and I killed Achazyahu son of king of the house of David.” The Tel Dan Stele is the first artifact known to reference King David.

- How do these discoveries help you connect with King David and the other men and women whose lives are described in the Bible?
- Want More? If you would like more evidence for the life of King David, visit <http://www.bib-arch.org/e-features/king-davids-palace.asp>

Thursday:

“They Said It”

“I know of no finding in archaeology that’s properly confirmed which is in opposition to the scriptures. The Bible is the most accurate history textbook the world has ever seen.” Dr. Clifford Wilson, former director of the Australian Institute of Archaeology.

“In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave the world was communicated through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man’s welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it.” Abraham Lincoln

“In every instance where the findings of archaeology pertain to the Biblical record, the archaeological evidence confirms, sometimes in detail fashion, the historical accuracy of Scripture. In those instances where archaeological findings seem to be at variance with the Bible, the discrepancy lies with the archaeological evidence, i.e., improper interpretation, lack of evidence, etc. – not with the Bible.” Dr. Bryant C. Wood, archaeologist, Associates for Biblical Research

“It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.” George Washington

“There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of Old Testament tradition.” Dr. William F Albright, archaeologist and Bible scholar

- Have you ever watched a TV show, seen a movie, or read an article that challenged the authority and accuracy of the Bible?
 - Did you experience any doubts?
 - Did you do any investigation on the evidence presented?
- In what ways has the Bible affected law and cultural practice in America?

Friday:

- As you think back over this week’s journey, what made the biggest impression on you? Why?
 - In what ways would you like to increase your knowledge of the Bible and its impact on your life? List at least one way you can start today:
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- If you don't have a relationship with Jesus Christ, talk to your Life Group leader about how to invite Jesus into your life.

Week 4

The Question – “What you believe about God’s goodness defines your relationship with Him.”

Job 1

In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. He had seven sons and three daughters, and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East. His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, “Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.” This was Job’s regular custom. One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.” Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. One day when Job’s sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house, a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, “Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house,

when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!” At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.” In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

Job 2

On another day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him. And the LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.” Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.” “Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.” The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. 8 Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes. His wife said to him, “Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!” He replied, “You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?” In all this, Job did not sin in what he said. When Job’s three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was.

Job 42

Then Job replied to the LORD: "I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know." "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has. So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has." So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite did what the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job's prayer. After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring. The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. And he also had seven sons and three daughters. The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers. After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so Job died, an old man and full of years.

Observations

I am shown that God does not CAUSE EVIL.

I can be sure that my PERSPECTIVE is limited.

I can be SATISFIED that God is at WORK.

Daily Travel Log

Monday:

The Suffering of Job

The Bible makes it clear that Job was a righteous man: “There once was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless—a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil” (Job 1:1). When God pointed out Job’s righteousness to Satan, Satan claimed that Job was dedicated to God only because God had blessed him and protected him. In response, God permitted Satan to take away Job’s wealth, health, and even all his children. Job’s response was to say, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised” (Job 1:21). Three of Job’s friends arrived, but rather than simply comforting him, they claimed that Job had brought the suffering on himself through his sin. Even as Job grieved for his children, suffered through poverty and physical pain, and stood up to his friends’ questioning, he continued to hold on to his faith and remained true to God.

- Commit to reading the book of Job this week. You can do this by reading 8-9 chapters a day.
- As you read through Job this week, consider some of the key lessons:
 - Bad things happen to good people.
 - All of creation belongs to God.
 - God is our comforter.
 - God understands all things, and our understanding is limited.
- How do you think Job’s response, in the midst of great pain and tragedy, affected the people around him?
- How do you feel God can use your painful past experiences to comfort those around you?

Tuesday:

2 Timothy 4:6-8 “As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.” NLT

Philippians 1:21-26 “For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better. But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don’t know which is better. I’m torn between two desires: I long to go and be with

Christ, which would be far better for me. But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live. Knowing this, I am convinced that I will remain alive so I can continue to help all of you grow and experience the joy of your faith. And when I come to you again, you will have even more reason to take pride in Christ Jesus because of what he is doing through me.” NLT

Philippians 4:12-13 “I know what it's like not to have what I need. I also know what it's like to have more than I need. I have learned the secret of being content no matter what happens. I am content whether I am well fed or hungry. I am content whether I have more than enough or not enough. I can do everything by the power of Christ. He gives me strength.” NIV

- The *idea* of these verses is that we are to live *for* God. How is that foreign to our self-centered society?
- How is your life like an *offering* to God?
- If you were to live completely for God, how would your life impact those around you?
- What would have to change for you to do that?

Wednesday:

Profile – Horatio Spafford

In 1873, a man named Horatio Spafford wrote a beautiful, inspiring song he titled “It Is Well with My Soul.” If you just read the title and the chorus of the song, you might think Horatio’s life was going well. Not so. In 1871, Spafford was unfortunate enough to lose his life savings in the great Chicago fire. Two years later, he had recovered to the point that he was going on vacation to England with his wife and four daughters, Horatio had to stay a few extra days in the U.S., so he sent his family on ahead, planning to join them later. On November 22, 1873, while the Spafford family was crossing the Atlantic, their ship struck another vessel, and 226 people died. Horatio’s wife survived, but all four of his daughter’s lost their lives in the tragic accident. Horatio boarded a ship for England, planning to reunite with his wife. It was while he was on board the ship, near the area where his young daughters had perished, that Spafford wrote “It Is Well with My Soul”.

- Take time to read and consider a few of the verses of the song below:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;

Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

It is well, with my soul,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so, it is well with my soul.

- Want More? You can hear the song by doing a search on YouTube. At least one version includes pictures of Spafford and his family.

Thursday:

Romans 5:3-5 “We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.” NLT

James 1:2-4 “Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.” NLT

Difficult Time In My Life	Hardest, most painful part	Something good or that I learned

- How do your experiences match up with the Bible passages?

Friday:

- As you think back over this week’s journey, what made the biggest impression on you? Why?
- Were you able to read the book of Job this week? What did you learn from Job’s suffering, his reaction, and his conclusions?
- How can you apply those lessons to your own life?
- If you don’t have a relationship with Jesus Christ, talk to your Life Group leader about how to invite Jesus into your life.

Week 5

The King – “What you believe about Jesus’ identity determines your path in life.”

John 8:57-58

“The people said, “You aren’t even fifty years old. How can you say you have seen Abraham?”

Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!”
NLT

Mark 14:61-64

“But Jesus was silent and made no reply. Then the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” Jesus said, “I AM. And you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, “Why do we need other witnesses? You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?” “Guilty!” they all cried. “He deserves to die!” NLT

Observations

I must weigh the AVAILABLE EVIDENCE.

I must consider the POSSIBLE CONCLUSIONS.

I must make an APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.

Daily Travel Log

Monday: Did You Know?

Act 12:1-2 “It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.” NIV

When the eleven remaining apostles and other early leaders of the Christian church began to proclaim the truth about Jesus, they were greatly persecuted by the Jewish religious leaders and the Romans. Most were imprisoned and beaten, and eventually almost all of them were martyred for their beliefs. While the Bible gives details only about the death of James, we have *tradition* – information passed down from the first- and second-century church leaders – regarding the deaths of these leaders. The chart below lists the apostles and key Christian leaders of the church and how each of them is understood to have died.

Name	Manner of Death	Name	Manner of Death
Peter	Crucified	Thomas	Stabbed by a lance
Andrew	Whipped & crucified	James, Jesus' brother	Thrown from the Temple & clubbed to death
James	Beheaded	Simon	Crucified
Philip	Crucified	John	Boiled in oil, survived & died of natural causes
Bartholomew	Whipped & crucified	Jude, also called Thaddaeus	Crucified
Matthias, also called Nathaniel	Stoned & beheaded	Matthew	Killed by a sword
Paul	Beheaded		

- What is your reaction to these Christian leaders being tortured and killed for maintaining that Jesus rose from the dead?
- How does this impact your faith?

Tuesday: They Said It

“Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love, and at this hour millions of men would die for him.”

Napoleon Bonaparte

“Nero fastened the guilt and infected the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of

Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus..." Tactus, a first-century Roman senator and historian, referring to the death of Jesus at the hands of Pontius Pilate.

"A man who was completely innocent offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act." Mahatma Gandhi

"I am a historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history." H.G. Wells

"As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene...No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life." Albert Einstein

- Which of these quotes affects you most? Why?
- What do the people around you and in the media say about Jesus?
- How do their comments affect your own views?

Wednesday: Did You Know?

In 1968, in the midst of a construction project in Jerusalem, workers discovered the remains of a Jewish burial site containing thirty-five individual remains. The burial site was dated to approximately AD 70, during the time of Roman rule. The remains were found in fifteen *ossuaries*-stone burial containers used during the time of Christ.

One of the human skeletons was particularly interesting to religious scholars because the man, named Yohanan Ben Hagalgol, had been crucified. A large nail, six to seven inches long, was still embedded in his feet, having been driven sideways through the heel bones. Scientists who examined the skeleton also found that the nails had been driven through the lower section of the radius and ulna bones, near the wrists. The radius bones showed signs of repeated friction from the bone rubbing against the large nail. The friction could have been caused by Yohanan repeatedly pulling himself upward to breathe and then sinking back down into a lower position.

In addition, Yohanan's lower leg bones were broken from a single blow, most likely by a Roman soldier. It was common for Roman soldiers to break the legs of crucifixion victims; doing so made it more difficult for the person to push upward to breathe and thus hastened the victim's death.

- Compare this description of Yohanan's remains to the description John gives of Jesus' crucifixion: John 19:31-33 "It was the day of preparation,

and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was the Passover). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs.” NLT

- Toward the end of His ministry, Jesus deliberately journeyed toward Jerusalem, knowing the death that awaited Him. Take a few moments and write a short prayer thanking Him for His love and sacrifice.

Thursday:

Matthew 4:19 “Jesus called out to them, ‘Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!’ “ NLT

John 12:26 “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.” NIV

Luke 9:23-26 “Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed? If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels.” NLT

- How would you say you have responded to Jesus’ invitation to follow Him?
- Evaluate the use of your time each week: Next to each line, write the percentage of your time that is spent following each person, group of people or goal. They should total up to 100 percent.

_____ Jesus

_____ Pursuit of money

_____ Example of your friends

_____ Your spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend

_____ Career goals

_____ Doing what’s expected of you or what you see others do

_____ Political Leaders

_____ Direction and advice from your parents

_____ A religious leader

_____ Other

_____ Other

- As you look over your list, what conclusions do you come to?
- Is there anything you would like to change? If so, what would those changes be?

Friday:

- As you think back over this week’s journey, what made the biggest impression on you? Why?
- Think about the two questions Jesus asked His disciples:
 - “Who do people say I am?” If you asked your family and friends (those you spend the most time with) who Jesus is, how would they answer?
 - Perhaps the most important question is the second, “Who do you say I am?” How would you answer that question?
- If you don’t have a relationship with Jesus Christ, talk to your Life Group leader about how to invite Jesus into your life.

Week 6

The Path – “The path you follow in your spiritual journey determines your destination.”

John 14:1-6

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” NIV

Observations

I should realize the INTENTION of Jesus’ words.

I must recognize the INCLUSIVITY of Jesus’ words.

I will respond to the INVITATION of Jesus’ words.

Daily Travel Log

Monday: Did You Know?

The chart below describes the basic beliefs of the five of the most popular religions in the world.

Religion	Belief about God	Path to Eternity	Attitude toward other religions
Buddhism	There is no god	Enlightenment	Other religions are false
Hinduism	There are many gods	Reincarnation	All religions are true
Islam	One god (Allah)	The Five Pillars	Other religions are false
Judaism	One God (Yahweh)	Obeying the law	Other religions are false
Christianity	One God (Father, Son & Holy Spirit)	God's grace & faith in Jesus Christ	Other religions are false

- A recent study of religious beliefs in America found that:
 - 43% of Americans agree with the statement “It doesn’t matter what religious faith you follow because they all teach the same lesson.”
 - 40% of Americans agree with the statement “All people will experience the same outcome after death, regardless of their religious beliefs.”
- What is your level of agreement with each of those statements?

Tuesday: Your Faith Path

Do you know why you believe what you believe about God or about spiritual matters? Most people haven’t stopped to think about their reasons or about how they arrived at their beliefs – but it’s vitally important to do so. Here are six approaches or “faith paths” that individuals use to choose their faith:

Faith Path	Description	Assessment
Relativistic	Assuming that whatever they believe magically becomes true for them.	Tempting, but doesn’t work in any other area of life, so why trust it in the spiritual realm.
Traditional	Passively accepting the teachings passed down by their parents or teachers.	These teachings could be right, but you need to test traditions to make sure they’re based on truth.
Authoritarian	Submitting to the ideas of a powerful leader or organization.	These ideas could be correct, but the credentials and messages of those authorities need to be weighed carefully.

Intuitive	Relying on spiritual instincts or hunches.	Instincts too can sometimes be helpful, but without further information, they can also lead you down blind alleys.
Mystical	Believing what they think God told them directly.	God <i>can</i> speak to us, but 1 Thess 5:21 cautions us to <i>test everything....hold on to what is good</i> and Gal 1:8-9 warns against accepting any teaching that contradicts the Biblical message.
Evidential	Using logic and real-world facts to scrutinize spiritual things.	We're wise to apply these inescapable God-given tests – logic and evidence – to all truth claims. Jesus often helped His listeners overcome their doubts about His teachings by appealing to His works and miracles. 1 Thess 5:21 " <i>Not only do my words make sense; my actions provide the evidence that what I'm saying is true.</i> "

- After reading through the descriptions of the six paths to faith, which one(s) best describe how you've arrived at your beliefs about God?
- How satisfied are you with the path you've been on? Would it be helpful to choose another path as you move forward in your spiritual journey? If so, which one(s)?
- For more information: "Choosing Your Faith" by Mark Mittelberg

Wednesday: Profile: Nabeel Qureshi

Nabeel Qureshi was born in California to devout Muslim parents who had immigrated to the U.S. from Pakistan. As part of his Muslim upbringing, Nabeel learned Arabic before he was even taught English, and by the age of five, he had not only read the whole Qur'an in Arabic but had even memorized many chapters. He recited part of the Qur'an every morning and religiously went through five daily prayers. Nabeel even learned many of the evidences for his faith, and was devoted to the teaching of Islam.

In 2001, Nabeel became friends with David Wood, who was a Christian apologist (defender of the Christian faith) as well as a devoted follower of Jesus. The two men launched into earnest discussions about the evidence for both religions. Nabeel questioned the accuracy of the Bible; David talked about the evidence provided by thousands of manuscripts. Nabeel had been taught that Jesus never claimed to be God; David countered with Scriptures showing Jesus' claim of divinity. Nabeel had read in the Qur'an that Jesus had not died on the cross, but after reviewing historical accounts, he came to realize that Jesus' death had been clearly established.

After investigating Christianity, Nabeel then turned his focus on an intense examination of Islam. While there were many things he loved about the religion, Nabeel was unable to find clear proof that Muhammad was a true prophet of God.

As the years went by and Nabeel searched for the one true God, he was amazed at the miraculous ways God answered his prayers. In the end, it wasn't just the evidence that convinced Nabeel to turn to Christianity, it was the love and grace of a God who would send His own Son to atone for human sins.

- What do you think was the most difficult part of Nabeel's GodQuest, and why?
- Take a moment and think about your own life and beliefs. Would you be willing to truly search for God, no matter where that might take you?
- Want more? For more information about Nabeel Qureshi, visit Acts17.net

Thursday:

2 Samuel 22:37 "You broaden the path beneath me, so that my ankles do not turn." NIV

Psalms 16:11 "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." NIV

Psalms 17:5 "My steps have held to your paths; my feet have not slipped." NIV

Psalms 25:4 "Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths." NIV

Psalms 119:32 "I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free." NIV

Psalms 119:105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." NIV

- The Bible often uses the word path to describe the way we choose to go through life. Which of these verses do you particularly like?
- Have you ever slipped off the path? What happened, and how did you get back on the right path?
- Have you ever been on the wrong path and then had to backtrack? What happened?
- Describe the path you're currently following.

Friday:

- As you think back over this week’s journey, what made the biggest impression on you? Why?
- After completing GodQuest, what do you believe? Fill in the chart below for each topic or question by stating what you believe and why.

Topic or Question	What do you believe?	Why?
Is there a God and who is He?		
Who is Jesus, and is He God?		
Does heaven exist, and how can you spend eternity there?		
Is the Bible the accurate, authentic Word of God?		

- If you don’t have a relationship with Jesus Christ, talk to your Life Group leader about how to invite Jesus into your life.
