

# The Problem of Superficial Faith

Pastor Jeff Bucknam | John 4:43-54

NOTE: As a guide, use these questions to help with group and family discussion, or for personal reflection. Not all questions are needed. Select the ones that will best serve your group as you grow in Christ together through His Word. *Soli Deo Gloria.*

## Ice Breaker

What's your favorite memory with your mom?

How does that point to the kind of person she is?

## Understanding the Text in Context

John repeatedly emphasizes belief throughout his Gospel. From this passage, describe the belief of the official based on his actions. What do his actions demonstrate about his belief? How does his (and his household's) belief deepen at the end of this text?

What (or Who?) is the focus of a more genuine faith? Why is such genuine faith important for John to underscore with this story (see also John 20:30-31).

## Connecting to Jesus and His Gospel

True faith treasures Jesus for who He is, not *merely* for what He can provide. From this text, what is Jesus able to do to provide (physically)? How does He do it?

How do Jesus' words and actions point people beyond a "superficial faith" that merely "wants Jesus for what He does, not who He is"?

How does a transactional relationship with God differ from the Gospel?

# Living Out the Truth

Why is it tempting to enjoy the gift more than the Giver? The miracle more than the Miracle Worker?

How do you think this makes the Giver feel? (As an analogy, when you give a gift, how do you want the recipient to respond?)

What has been the central object of your affection recently? Is it Christ or something else? Do you want Jesus himself, or mainly what you hope He will give you?

In light of the sermon, how does your perspective on the Lord need to change? How do you apply this message to your life?

How can knowing Jesus' power over illness (and all of creation) change how we pray? And, how can knowing Jesus' desire to bless beyond that and toward a more genuine understanding of Him further spur us on to pray? Pray together.

## Parenting Moment and Family Focus

Read John 4:46-54 together. How does the official – the father – demonstrate love for his son?

Discuss how the son receives two gifts, two blessings (one of being healed, and another a day later of believing in Jesus, the One who healed [v. 53]). Pray together, thanking God both for the gifts He gives (specifically naming some) and that He gives us Himself through Jesus.

## Further Study

For more background on “signs,” from the Old Testament to how they are significant in John’s Gospel, see the article “[Reading the Signs: Jesus in the Gospel of John.](#)”

For a (free) book, read [God is the Gospel: Meditations on God’s Love as the Gift of Himself.](#)

Looking ahead to next week’s Sermon and Text: Read the three sections in the Scripture Journals for John 5:1-18: “Jesus Gives Life Where No One Else Can,” “Jesus Confronts Empty Religion,” and “Jesus Claims Divine Authority.”