



Men's Golf Fellowship Speaker Discussion Questions

Mike Duke Leaders Guide

Spiritual Topics: God's Plan, Sovereignty, Humility, Trusting God

About the Talk: The focus of the talk given by Mike Duke, the former CEO of Walmart, was centered on God's Plan for his life. Do you think God has a plan for individual lives? How does that plan work itself out in real life? What is your part in God's plan? These are questions that bear reflection and self-examination as we consider our lives.

Discussion Questions

- Mike spoke of many people that gave him counsel and spoke into his life (High school teacher Mr. McDaniel, first boss John Whitehaure, his wife Susan) and he was humble enough to listen. How about you? Do you consider yourself humble enough to take counsel, even if it is counter to the direction you believe is right? Have you ever taken counsel from someone that changed the course of your life? Have you ever had a mentor? If not, why? *(Leader note: If appropriate lead the group to think of a spiritual direction or spiritual mentor)* Do you actually allow other people to significantly speak into your life? Have you ever taken counsel that went against the practicalities of life or perhaps what you thought as right? *(Leader note: Many times following Christ calls for you to take counsel that goes against the practicalities of life giving sacrificially, going to a dangerous part of the globe, not following your peers in some way, etc. If you are willing, please share with the group)*
Related Scripture: 12:15 - The importance of others in our lives (see also Prov 11:14, 19:20, 27:6)
 - Where we're going: Humility. The goal of this question is to guide the group to realize that spiritual growth takes a great deal of humility and dependence on others, specifically in the faith community. There is absolutely no such category in Christianity as 'Lone Ranger Christian'
 - Going Deeper: Read 1 Kings 12:1-15 and help the group notice that Rehoboam really sought out people who thought as he did. Help people to be honest in evaluating whether they really allow people to speak honestly into their lives or if they surround themselves with "yes" men. Notice how Paul spoke very hard truths into Peter's life in Gal. 2:11-15, and Peter listened!
- Mike used Yogi Berra's famous saying, "If you come to a fork in the road, take it" as a way to identify key moments where he saw God's plan working itself out in his life. Share with the group one substantial "fork in the road" that you have faced. How did you navigate the decision you made? Be honest, what part, if any, did your faith in God play in that decision? It has been said that 'God's fingerprints are all over your life, you just have to dust for prints'. Take some concerted time and look back over your life, do you see God's fingerprints (His plan) in your life at all? If so, how? **Related Scripture: Genesis 50:20 – Seeing God's plan in retrospect**
 - Where we're going: The Plan of God. The goal of this question is to help men realize that God actually helps, guides and cares about their life and has been involved in it from the beginning, even if they were not aware of it. Your job as the facilitator is to help tease this realization out using Genesis 50:20, even if they have never seen it before.
 - Going Deeper: Read Isa 46:10. The amazing thing is that because God is sovereign, He works even amidst the bad decisions, messes and sin in our lives to work out His purposes. Help the group to think of Old Testament Israel and brainstorm the many bad decisions and sins that they committed (cf. Num 13:26-33: The spies reporting back on the promised land, Judges 2:6-13: The people forgot the Lord, 1 Sam 8: The people wanting a king like the other nations, Isa 31:1-3: People trusting in other kings and not Yahweh, etc.) Yet God's ultimate

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purpose of bringing forth the messiah Jesus, the savior of the world from them (Gen 12:3b) was accomplished (That's what chapter 1 of Matthew's gospel is explaining).

- Mike spoke of a time when he resigned from a significant job without having another one to go to. Have you ever done something like that? Have you ever left a secure position without having anywhere to go? Mike also said that he would wake up in the middle of the night and read and re-read Psalm 23 focusing on God's promise to take care of him. Have you ever considered that God takes care of you? Take a moment to read Psalm 23. (Leader note: Depending on the maturity of the group, have someone read it or read it aloud yourself) In general, how do you feel about being taken care of or trusting another person to care for you? Consider this in light of getting older and having others begin to care for you? Does it make you feel nervous, anxious, fearful, etc.? (Leader's note: you could take this in the direction of Christ as the Good Shepherd caring, loving, feeding, protecting comforting and ultimately sacrificing his life in order to save theirs. cf. Rom 5:6-8, 8:32) **Related Scripture: Prov. 3:5-6 – Trusting God**
 - Where we're going: Trusting Christ. Not always, but sometimes God calls us to take a path that makes no sense, yet as believers we are called to trust that He knows better. The point of this question is to help men understand that our part of God's plan is to trust that Jesus, our true Good Shepherd, is indeed good and will take care of us. (cf. John 10:17-18)
 - Going Deeper: Read Matt 14:22-33. Think of the trust it took to step out of the boat. It made no worldly sense. It seemed impossible. It seemed ridiculous by human standards, yet Peter trusted the Lord and got out. Take special note that Jesus was never closer to Peter than when he was about to drown meaning that Christ is never closer than when we are in deepest need! To go even deeper, remind the group that trusting Christ does not always lead to worldly blessings, comfort, ease or prosperity as it did for Mike Duke. (cf. Read Hebrews 11:36-40)
- Mike had an epiphonal experience when he was in high school and the Georgia Tech football players challenged him that 'knowledge about Jesus wasn't enough, you need a relationship with him.' How does that challenge sit with you? What is the difference between knowing about someone and having a relationship with them? (Leader's note: If the group is ready, turn the discussion toward knowing about Jesus and having a relationship with Jesus?) **Related Scripture: John 17:3 – Relationship with Jesus**
- Where we're going: Religion or Relationship. Many people think that they are Christians for many inaccurate reasons (How much they know, how morally good they think they have been, how much they have given/donated, how obedient they have been or even being born into a religious/Christian family!). The point that we want to make clear in this question is that true Christianity is not about our doing, but what Christ has done for us by Jesus Christ. True saving faith is based on a trusting relationship with Jesus.
- Going Deeper: Religion is "the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods." In that respect, Christianity can be classified as a religion. However, practically speaking, Christianity has a key difference that separates it from other belief systems that are considered religions. That difference is relationship. Read Jn 6:28-29. Ask: How much of your Christianity is based on how much you do for God? (A good litmus test is asking if you think God's feelings toward you fluctuate according to your obedience or lack thereof) Now read Jn 8:19, 14:7 & 16:27. Based on all we have discussed here today, do you think you have a religion that you follow or an intimate, trusting relationship with Jesus?

Closing Prayer:

Lord, I ask that you would give me wisdom and spiritual insight so that I may deepen my relationship with Jesus, that it would become more robust and intimate, and that I will begin to realize the glorious inheritance to which he has called me. Please help me to be like that man who cried out, "I believe, help my unbelief!" (Prayer based on Eph 1:17-18)

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