

OFF THE Shelf

TALK IT OVER

Unshakable Faith: How to Stand Firm in a Culture of Lies

Off The Shelf - Week 2

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If you would like to watch the weekend message, visit www.saddleback.com/watch.

Open your group in prayer and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the questions provided or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions at the end of the document.

Scriptures

2 Timothy 4:1–5 (NIV), Hebrews 12:28 (NLT), Matthew 7:15–16 (NIV), 2 Timothy 4:3–4 (NIV), Matthew 16:24–25 (NIV), Jude 22–23 (NIV), John 20:27 (NIV), Matthew 14:31 (NIV), 1 Peter 5:8 (NIV), Habakkuk 3:2, Isaiah 45:8 (NIV), 1 John 4:4 (KJV)

Questions

1. Read 2 Timothy 4:1–5 aloud in your group. How does the Apostle Paul charge Timothy to lead the church to stand firm with unshakable faith in a culture of lies? What warning does Paul give in verses 3–4 with regard to false teachers?
2. Matthew 7:15–16 (NIV) says, *“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.”* As noted above, Paul says in 2 Timothy 4:3–4 (NIV), *“The time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.”* How do Matthew and Paul’s warnings with regard to false prophets and teachers encourage you to exercise discernment?
3. It’s too often the case that the more someone progresses academically or professionally— the more they regress spiritually! A common pattern is Conversion → Discipline → Prosperity → Spiritual Drift! But Hebrews 12:28 (NLT) says: *“Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe.”* What word does Hebrews 12:28 use to describe the kingdom “we are receiving”? Discuss how we can anchor our souls and avoid drifting away from God’s eternal truths.

4. Spiritual drift can be caused by relying on human authority rather than God's authority. It can also be caused by progressive theology—that is, reinterpreting revelation to suit our culture. Both errors enthrone self-centered autonomy over God's Word—and make it practically impossible to follow the Lord! Also, a faith based on self doesn't reproduce to the next generation! Jesus says in Matthew 16:24–25 (NIV), *"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it."* According to Matthew 16:24–25, what does the Lord require of his disciples? Discuss the risk of making humanity your highest authority when interpreting God's authority.
5. A common pattern when someone is drifting with the human culture around them is Doubt → Deconstruction → Denial. Deconstruction is the process of dismantling one's accepted beliefs. The enemy is on a mission to isolate us and attack the core foundations of our faith! Jesus is more than just a good moral teacher; he is the Son of God who bore our sins on the cross in order to give us eternal life! Discuss how Jude 22–23 (NIV) below teaches us to help others who are drifting in a downward spiral to hell: *"Be merciful to those who doubt; save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear."* Discuss how we're to show mercy as The Righteous One, Jesus Christ, showed us mercy.
6. God does things that are beyond science or human explanation! It could be protection in a dangerous situation, a precise answer to prayer, unexpected financial provision, physical healing, or a broken relationship restored! Some things are simply supernatural! At a minimum, every Christian must believe in the miraculous bodily resurrection of Jesus! Share examples of God's supernatural work that you're personally familiar with in your group.
7. The Lord says in Isaiah 45:8 (NIV), *"You heavens above, rain down my righteousness; let the clouds shower it down. Let the earth open wide, let salvation spring up, let righteousness flourish with it; I, the LORD, have created it."* In your group, pray aloud for God to send the rain of revival—to bring the spiritually dead back to life! As Hebrews 12:28 says, pray that the Lord anchors his people with *"a Kingdom that is unshakable!"* As you pray, remember 1 John 4:4 (KJV): *"Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world!"* Discuss in your group how you can stand firm with unshakable faith even in a culture of lies! What is one habit you will start today to guard yourself against drift (ex., prayer, Scripture reading, small group)? Pray aloud in your group for revival—for yourself, for someone who is drifting, and for our culture!

Three Essential Questions

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message.

1. **What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
2. **What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
3. **What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you've learned today?*

Are you interested in the Bible and in helping small groups benefit from the weekend message? Well, you are in luck! Saddleback members like you create these discussion guides each week. If you are interested in joining the team, please email JasonW@saddleback.com.