



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Against All Odds – Part 2
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Main Idea – We grow in our faith through knowledge gained by studying and reading the Bible. We also grow in our understanding of God through our experiences in the church. God gave us numerous senses, through which He reveals Himself to us. Christianity is a multi-sensory experience.

Knowledge is necessary

- Christians read and study the Bible so they can effectively use God's Word in their lives.
- **2 Timothy 2:15 – Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**
- Jesus often quoted Scripture. Perhaps the best-known example is when Satan tried to tempt Him after He had fasted 40 days.
- **Matthew 4: 1-11** tells that story. To counter Satan's attacks, each time Jesus quoted verses from Deuteronomy.
- He was able to use Scripture because he had gained knowledge of it by reading and studying it beforehand.

Personal experience is necessary

- However, just knowing the Bible will not likely – by itself - help you grow closer to God.
- Personal involvement in your local church is very important to your – and your family's – spiritual growth.
- The many experiences encountered by being personally involved in a church congregation cannot be replaced with technology or book knowledge (or outside social involvement).
- When God created us He gave us many senses. Our senses enable us to fully experience life.
- In a similar way, God enables us to fully experience Him, and our faith, through our different senses.
- Notice the different senses identified in this passage:
 - 1 John 1:1-4 – That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life – the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us – that

which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. (NKJV)

- In those verses, the Apostle John was attempting to convince the reader that everything he wrote about Jesus was true because he (John) experienced Jesus through many different senses.
- We don't forget things when multiple senses are engaged.
- Research shows that children retain more information in school when their different senses are engaged in the classroom lessons.

Church should be multi-sensorial

- Our personal involvement with our faith should involve multiple senses, just as the Apostle John experienced with Jesus.
- For this multi-sensorial experience to happen, one has to place church membership as a priority in life. We should keep church activities as a significant part of our personal schedules. Other activities outside the church may have to be sacrificed for this to happen.
- **Psalm 34:8 – Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him! (NLT)**
- As an example, those of us who have been baptized as adults know that baptism is a multi-sensorial experience. So, too, are many other things in the church.
- “To have knowledge about Jesus is valuable, but to experience Him is priceless.”

Jesus invites us to experience

- Our church offers many opportunities outside the weekend services that are important to engage.
- Your spiritual growth will happen by experiencing multiple things in the church, and having personal relationships and friendships.
- The Gospel message is, itself, an invitation to experience God in different ways. Jesus is willing to reveal Himself to us through our senses, just as he did with his disciple Thomas.
- **John 20: 26-29 – A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have**

believed.” (NIV)

God will then use your experiences to engage others

- God uses our experiences to help reveal Himself to others.
- Be willing to share both the good and bad experiences of your life with others.
- Feel what others feel; allow them to feel what you feel.
- No one is alone. No one should be isolated. Everything you have experienced has also been experienced by others.
- Church is the place where God brings together His people, to experience Him through the Holy Spirit, and to have fellowship with each other.

Reflective Questions for Against All Odds – Part 2

1. List the ingredients of your favorite food. No matter how skilled you are at describing those ingredients, others will need to actually taste the food to know it, right? Is there a parallel here with knowing about Jesus, and actually knowing Him? How should this experience be expressed in a church’s array of different ministries and activities?
2. If an effective church should engage its members through multiple senses, where is the line that should not be crossed into pure “entertainment” in church?
3. Each of us has at least one testimony God can use to reach others. Think about your testimonies of what God has done for you, and think about ways you can share those testimonies using more than one sense.