

UNSHAKEABLE

AGAINST ALL ODDS

WEEK 3: WHEN YOUR BELIEFS ARE BELITTLED

"Your education is your life, so guard it well." -Proverbs 4:13b

Most people don't care what you believe. But there are a vocal few who want to belittle your faith. Daniel gives us an example of someone who was indoctrinated against God's teaching for three years yet grew in God's wisdom and understanding. So his advice was ten times better than all the king's other advisors (see Daniel 1). Proverbs 23:23 (CEV) tells us to *"invest in truth and wisdom, discipline and good sense, and don't part with them."* We need to be lifelong learners and remember that God will reward us. Let's learn more about how to have an unshakable faith.

OPENING PRAYER

"Start with God—the first step in learning is bowing down to God; only fools thumb their noses at such wisdom and learning." -Proverbs 1:7 (The Message)

1. Starting with God requires that you read the Bible to acquire wisdom and learning. How can you set yourself up to take a stand for God? Have you ever been belittled because of your beliefs and how did you defend your faith in God? Please share your story.

"Your commandments give me great understanding. It's no wonder I can see and hate every false way of life." - Psalm 119:104

2. Reflect on a time you encountered the living Christ through the Scriptures. If you remember, share with the group what you were reading at the time. How does Scripture help you know (not intellectually, but in your heart) about Jesus or about yourself? Then, as a group, discuss how meditating on the Bible's truth could positively change your life and/or how you relate to others.

"Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'" -1 Corinthians 15:33

3. If bad company corrupts good character, then it follows that we should choose believers as our closest friends. What poor choices about friends you have made in your life? Share a significant character changing experience with the group.

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another . . ." -Hebrews 10:25

4. Have each member share a time when their faith was strong. What key relationships with other believers kept their faith growing? How does a small group help members hold firm in love, compassion, joy and commitment to the ways of Jesus? Encourage one another by explaining how group members filled you with hope during difficult times.

DIVING DEEPER (optional)

1. In Proverbs 19:8, God promises success for those who get wisdom and love learning. No matter our age, we can continue to learn. But it comes with a cost - our time. Examine how you spend your time. What changes can you make to grow in wisdom and understanding?
2. How could arguing with a skeptic harm the message of the Bible? Why can being a listening ear and an understanding presence help them understand God's love? What needs to be transformed in your life so that you can live a good life to silence those who condemn the gospel?
3. In what ways have you insulated yourself or compartmentalized your faith in Jesus in order to avoid having your faith belittled? What do you fear would happen if you were more open or less insulated?

Prayer requests and closing prayer.