

The Shack  
Week 4: The Cave  
Mar. 8-15



1. Have you ever judged someone negatively only to discover that your assumption about them was wrong? How did your realization about their true character change your relationship with them? How did you feel about your original judgment of the person and your new realization? Please read Matthew 7:1-5 and discuss Jesus' wisdom in these verses.
2. On page 141 of the book, Jesus says to Mack;

*"You imagine. Such a powerful ability, the imagination! That power alone makes you so like us. But without wisdom, imagination is a cruel task-master. If I may prove my case, do you think humans were designed to live in the present or the past or the future?"*

Do you agree with Jesus' statement? Where do you find yourself most often; focusing on the past, the present or the future? What do you think of Jesus' comments on page 142:

*"Because you don't believe. You don't know that we love you. The person who lives by their fears will not find freedom in my love. I am not talking about rational fears regarding legitimate dangers, but imagined fears, and especially the projection of those into the future. To the degree that those fears have a place in your life, you neither believe I am good nor know deep in your heart that I love you."*

3. The topic of freedom comes up a lot in The Shack. How does the world define independence, particularly our identity as Americans? How do you define true freedom? Read Isaiah 44:22 and then read the middle of page 123 concerning Sarayu's comments on humans tendency to chose independence over relationship. How easy it for you to submit to the work of the Trinity in your life? Is this the standard by which our world operates? How do you stand in your faith when you are up against the beliefs of this world and when you face personal heartaches?
4. If you faced Sophia in the cave as Mack did, how would you respond to her request that you decide the eternal future of the five most important people in your life (page 163)? Did this passage in The Shack change your way of understanding the grace and judgment of God when bad things happen? Please read Isaiah 53: 3-12 and Isaiah 55: 7-9. How do you interpret these verses in light of what you've read in The Shack?
5. Sophia challenges Mack to judge humanity within the context that Mack believes God does. She says to him on page 168;

*"I am only asking you to do something that you believe God does. He knows every person ever conceived, and he knows them so much deeper and clearer than you will ever know your own children."*

How do you perceive God's judgment? Is it fair? Is it righteous? Is it timely? And is it always to your liking especially when bad things happen to you and justice doesn't seem to happen right away? How do you handle tough situations when the answer to "why" is impossible to answer? How do you handle anger, fear and resentment during these times? How do you react when you read Deut 28:1-14; 15? How did it impact you when you read that freedom is found through submission to the Godhead? Is this an obtainable goal for you? How can you become less so that God can become more in your life?