

Message Discussion Guide

GOD-CENTERED COMMUNITY

The Church at Brook Hills, Dr. David Platt

May 3, 2009

2 Timothy 3:10-4:8

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use, and there may be instances when you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience, not complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool rather than a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to share quotes or ideas they feel express who they are, which might include a Bible verse, idea from a famous author, a movie line, or a song lyric. For each one shared, ask:

- When did you first hear this thought?
- Why did it resonate with you?
- With whom have you shared this thought? Family? Friends? Coworkers?
- Do you have this written down in your home where you see it daily?

Explain that today we will be discussing the foundations of a church covenant, which is the expression of what our community of believers is grounded on. Emphasize that we'll look at the centrality of God's Word to this expression.

Option 2

Encourage learners to share how they perceive Christian bookstores by asking:

- When you walk inside a Christian bookstore, which section do you typically go to first?
- When looking to buy a book there, what criteria do you use in selecting one?
- Do you find it difficult to spend time reading God's Word when you're also reading a so-called "Christian book"? Why or why not? If so, what are the dangers of that?

Explain that today we will be discussing how no matter what life throws our way, the Word of God is the only thing God promises to bless in growing us into Christ's image.

Review the Message . . .

The Word of God in the Community of Faith...

We are a community formed by God's Word.

- We are saved by the Word.
- We are sanctified through the Word.

Message Discussion Guide

GOD-CENTERED COMMUNITY

The Church at Brook Hills, Dr. David Platt

May 3, 2009

2 Timothy 3:10-4:8

- We are _____ servants _____ of the Word.

Discussion...

Emphasize that Paul told Timothy he is who he is because of the Word poured into him. Enlist a learner to read 2 Timothy 3:10-16. What do these verses remind you of regarding the importance of God's Word? Why do you think the Church is so tempted to look to books other than God's Word as the source for Christian growth?

- Refer to the concentric circles on the handout. Encourage learners to share ways they have experienced this transformation from the inside out since salvation.
- We always act according to what we believe, and sin is ultimately a belief problem. What other ways besides God's Word do people seek to make changes in their lives? Looking at the circle, how effective is it for someone to try to change his or her behavior without spending intimate time with God in His Word?
- Looking at 2 Timothy 3:16 and 4:2, what does it mean to be a "servant of the Word"?

Application . . .

- Who has poured God's *Word* into your life? How have you been affected by those people in deeper ways than other people who have poured into your life, such as school teachers or authors? Why is there such a difference?
- Look at the concentric circles. What would the Church look like if each member made God's Word the true core of his or her life? (*Be sure to talk about the radical change God's Word brings to life.*) How do you think the world's view of the Church would be different?
- The Word of God is the only thing God has promised to bless in growing you into Christ's image. How do you think your life would be different if you poured yourself into knowing and serving God's Word in a deeper way? What stands in the way of this coming about? How can you overcome those obstacles?

We are a community _____ in awe _____ of God's Word.

- The Word evokes the _____ worship _____ of God.
 - It reminds us of our need for His _____ presence _____.
- The Word exalts the _____ Son _____ of God.
 - It reminds us of our submission to His _____ authority _____.

Discussion...

- Invite someone to read 2 Timothy 4:1-2. David, as a pastor and preacher, referred to himself as "the waiter, not the chef." What does this analogy mean? Why do you think some preachers are tempted to try to be the chef? What danger is involved in that line of thinking?
- Based on 2 Timothy 4:1-2, what is a believer to do with God's Word? (*Preach it; be prepared by it; correct, rebuke, and encourage others with it.*) Which of these things is easiest for you? Most difficult?

Message Discussion Guide

GOD-CENTERED COMMUNITY

The Church at Brook Hills, Dr. David Platt

May 3, 2009

2 Timothy 3:10-4:8

- Refer to verse 1. How does this verse remind you of Christ's ultimate authority? How have you experienced God's Word reminding you of your need for His presence?

Application . . .

- Why are we tempted to look to a person rather than God Himself in His Word? Why do you think that is the case?
- How have you made it your aim to "be prepared in season and out of season"? How can you make this preparation an even greater part of your life?
- As "a community in awe of God's Word," how should we relate to each other differently based on these truths?

We are a community _____ trusting _____ in God's Word.

- We want our lives to _____ count _____.
- We long for our Savior to _____ come back _____.

Discussion...

- Read 2 Timothy 4:3-4. What should we do when people don't want to hear God's truth in His Word? (*Preach it anyway!*)
- David shared the example of Walter Kaiser, a great OT scholars, who said the following: "Many pastors can preach whole messages with little more than a tip of the hat to a clause or two taken from a biblical context that few, if any, recognize. Even more pastors have decided that using the Bible is a handicap for meeting the needs of the different generations; therefore, they have gone to drawing their sermons from the plethora of recovery and pop-psychology books that fill our Christian bookstores. The market-forces demand that we give them what they want to hear if we wish them to return and pay for the mega-sanctuaries that we have built." How has our culture tried to tempt us to leave the purity of God's Word? Why?
- Read 2 Timothy 4:5-8. What motivated Paul to keep fighting hard until the end? (*the crown of righteousness waiting for him*)
- How do these verses motivate you to stand strong to the end?

Application . . .

- Read through the covenant's second bullet point on the front of the handout. Read Hebrews 10:23. Emphasize that the Lord's Supper is the way God designed for us to celebrate the past, present, and future hope we have as believers. Invite group members to share the following:
 - One word you feel when you meditate on Christ's past work on the cross.
 - One word describing what He's doing in your life right now.
 - One word you anticipate to feel when you see Him when He returns for His bride.