

## Message Discussion Guide

### GOSPEL THREADS: THE CHARACTER OF GOD AND THE SINFULNESS OF MAN

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The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

July 13, 2008

Romans 3:23

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 where 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 to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

## **Connect . . .**

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

### **Option 1**

Ask learners to answer the following questions:

- What are your top three favorite topics for discussion?
- How often do you like to discuss these topics?
- How many of your friends/acquaintances/ co-workers could guess at least two of these topics?

Explain that often what is the most important in our lives is what will naturally flow out of our conversation, even when we're not expecting it. We will look today at ways to allow the gospel to become a natural part of our conversation.

### **Option 2**

Invite learners to discuss the following questions:

- How do you think American culture views God or portrays its view of God?
- What do you think a typical "religious" American thinks about God's character?
- How are these views demonstrated in everyday life?
- Many presentations of the gospel seem to begin with man or the benefits of the gospel. Why do you think that is so?

Explain that God is the starting point for the gospel, and a biblical view of Him sets the stage for how we understand and portray the gospel. We will take a look today at how to allow a biblical view of God to permeate our natural conversations that happen every day.

## **Review the Message . . .**

### **THREAD #1: THE CHARACTER OF GOD** **God is the just and gracious Creator of all things.**

- He is our **Creator**.
  - We **belong** to Him.
- He is our **Judge**.
  - We are **accountable** to Him.

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- He is our **Savior**.
  - We **need** Him.

#### Discussion Questions

- Enlist three volunteers to read Romans 1:19; 4:17; and 8:19-21.
- What do these passages indicate about God's relationship with the earth and with humanity? How much control does He maintain in His creation?
- Focusing on Romans 4:17, who has the sole authority to give life? What does this indicate about the source of man's life?
- Because God chooses to give man life, does that mean that all of humanity belongs to Him? Even those who choose not to follow or believe in Him?
- Invite three volunteers to read Romans 2:15-16; Romans 3:25-26; and 8:33. What do these passages indicate about God's expectations of His people?
- Based on these verses, who has the sole authority to determine the righteousness of each person? To whom, then, is every human being accountable?
- Enlist three volunteers to read Romans 5:1-2; 6:8-11; and 6:23. As a righteous Judge, how did God make a way for humanity to be deemed righteous before His holy judgment?
- Scripture indicates that Christ is the only way to salvation. Therefore, what does this indicate about man's need for God?

#### Application . . .

- As God's creation, what should our relationship with Him look like?
- How does your view of sharing the gospel change if you believe that all people belong to Him?
- How does viewing God as a judge impact our view of His character? Does this change the way that we approach our obedience to Him?
- Why is it important for mankind that God be just?
- Knowing that God is not indifferent to our need for salvation, what does this truth reveal about God?
- How do our actions in everyday life reflect our need for God?
- What should be our response/reaction to God in light of these truths?

#### THREAD #2: THE SINFULNESS OF MAN

**We are each created by God, but we are all corrupted by sin.**

- We have **rebelled** against God.
- We are **separated** from God.
- We are **dead** without God.

#### Discussion Questions

- Enlist four volunteers to read Romans 1:21-25; 3:23; 5:12; and 6:23.

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- What do these passages indicate about the source of man's disobedience towards God?
- What is sin? Who is affected by sin? Focusing on Romans 3:23, can God's glory also be affected by humanity's sin? How?
- How does this rebellion affect one's relationship with God?
- What kind of death does Paul mean when he states that sin causes us to die?
- What do these passages indicate about man's inclination towards God? Sin?

#### *Application . . .*

- What role does sin often play in our discussions with others about the gospel?
- How do we portray the effects of sin? Can the way that we express the effects of sin determine that way that a person views God?
- Why is sin such a difficult topic for discussion?
- Within the church, do we want to portray a perfect relationship with God (without sin)? Could having a more transparent relationship with others help us to see ourselves in need of God more clearly?
- Could our own portrayal of a relationship with God make unbelievers less likely to see their need for God?

### SEWING GOSPEL THREADS . . .

#### God is the just and gracious Creator of all things.

- Talk about God like He is Someone you know.
- Talk about God like He is Someone you worship.
- Talking about God as Creator . . .
  - Acknowledge the glory of God in creation every chance you have.
  - Acknowledge the presence of God in specific facets of life.
    - God is working in my life (in this way) . . .
    - God is blessing me (in this way) . . .
    - God is leading me (in this direction) . . .
    - God is guiding me (to make this decision) . . .
    - God is teaching me (this truth) . . .
    - God is showing me (this realization) . . .
- Talking about God as Judge . . .
  - Express confidence in God even when things go wrong.
  - Express humility before God (and others) when you do something wrong.
- Talking about God as Savior . . .
  - Constantly point out evidences of God's grace in and around you.
  - Consistently credit God as the source of everything good in and around you.

#### *Application . . .*

- How can I portray God as a relational being Who still deserves my honor, praise, and worship? What is the danger in being too casual about God in our conversations? What is the danger in not portraying His relational character?
- Looking at Romans 1:18-20, Paul clearly states that God's attributes are evident throughout the creation. What opportunities do we have to draw attention to God through His creation?
- Do we acknowledge God's work in our lives each day? What are some ways to share how God is working in my life with others?
- What is the danger in thinking that we can just live a life that reflects God's character without speaking about Him?
- How can we use difficult experiences as opportunities to bring glory to God?
- Do we thank God for His grace and goodness in our lives? How can we show His grace and goodness to others in our conversations?

**We are each created by God, but we are all corrupted by sin.**

- **Speak respectfully to and about all people as individuals created in the image of God.**
- **Look intentionally for opportunities to encourage others.**
- **Talking about our rebellion . . .**
  - **Speak humbly about the seriousness of sin.**
  - **Speak honestly about our propensity to sin.**
- **Talking about our separation . . .**
  - **Acknowledge the root of sin in and around you.**
  - **Acknowledge the consequences of sin in and around you.**
- **Talking about our deadness . . .**
  - **Constantly point to our dependence on God.**
  - **Constantly point to our desperation for God.**

**Application . . .**

- Looking back at Romans 4:17, Paul indicates that all people belong to God because He created them and gave them life. How should that impact the way that we interact with others?
- How can we encourage someone to live in a way that glorifies God? How can we encourage someone to overcome sin? How can we encourage someone who is living with the effects of sin?
- How can we maintain a humble view of our own proneness toward sin in our conversations?
- How can we remind others of the consequences of sin and our need for God without sounding condemning or "preachy"?
- With what attitude must we approach when talking about sin to others?

**THE CHALLENGE . . .**

David challenged the church to begin making steps toward sewing threads of the gospel in their everyday lives. He gave two challenges:

***Application . . .***

- **Memorize these two threads. Find a verse from Romans that supports each thread, and also memorize those two verses.**
- **Each day, look intentionally for ways to sew each of these threads at least once. Pray for opportunities to share with unbelievers.**

Before you dismiss, have your group share any opportunities they have had to sew gospel threads this week so far and how others have responded. Then, pray for those who have heard those truths that the Holy Spirit will weave those truths together in their minds and hearts to help them understand the gospel. Also, pray for one another that you'll be sensitive to see the opportunities that God will give you to sew gospel truths this week and that the Holy Spirit will enable each of you with wisdom and love as you sew those truths.