

Small Group Guide

DISCIPLE-MAKING: SHOW THE WORD

The Church at Brook Hills

Chris Nichols

April 3, 2011

Acts

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects 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 an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Sermon Outline

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We must see His initial movement .

- See His ascension upward.
 - Christ's eternal glory demands our earthly gaze .
 - God's will always arranges for Christ's worth to be exalted.
 - Our version of "show the word" often means we want to show ourselves .
 - There is no correlation between deny yourself and promote yourself.
- Experience His outpouring downward .
 - He will move through their lives .
 - Want to see greatness? Focus on the lowly .
 - We align with the pattern that He has already shown.

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- He will infuse them with His life.
 - We are not to be believed in the least!
 - Jesus has all the credibility; He is the one to be seen.

Our Empowered Response

- As we turn the pages of the text of Acts, we cannot miss the life interaction.
 - Sure, Paul talked in public, but it says here that he talked in all their homes!
 - God talked through Paul's life as the whiteboard that the Gospel is written on.
 - The Gospel is a messy business!
 - The Gospel is a together experience.
 - There's together talking, together looking, together praying.
 - But there is also together traveling.
- Spirit-led risk.
 - Can Christ's work in us warrant bold behavior by people around us?
- Sacrificial sharing.
 - The setting is not important.
 - Christ's use of your setting... infinitely important.
- Simple methods, Salvation motives.
 - Christ's love displayed in normal life circles.
 - This is not complicated.
 - Spend your life in devotion to knowing Christ
 - Welcome to ministry, all of you.
 - Your life is custom designed to point people to Christ

His Ongoing Involvement

- God will use our lives as we live them!
 - He appeared to Paul for a purpose.
 - To open their eyes...to show them the word.
 - You have the help that comes from God.

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- Let our lives not be hidden in a corner.
- We are far too impatient.
- When we begin to ask God for lives like this...
- We will begin to see God answer in visible ways like this!

Two responses...

Message Summary

By taking an overall look back at the Book of Acts, Chris Nichols led the church to remember that an important foundation of disciple-making is Showing the Word. One pitfall to avoid in our attempts to Show the Word is that we often seek to do it in our own strength in order to really show ourselves instead of the Living Word. Because we are all prone to self-deception and all have blind spots in the ways we are actually Showing the Word through our lives, we need to remember Jesus' command to His disciples in Acts 1:4-5 to stand still—pause—and wait for the help of the Holy Spirit. Initially, Jesus ascended upward to be with His Father, and His Spirit was outpoured downward on His followers to empower them for service (Acts 2), moving through their lives to change the world as they followed His pattern. Jesus, through His Spirit, infuses believers with His very life giving them credibility to Share the Word as others see Him living in His followers. We must respond in the same way as the early disciples did.

Our empowered response involves life interaction with others, Spirit-led risk, sacrificial sharing, and simple methods with gospel-centered motives. Pastor Chris reminded us that while Paul talked about Jesus in public, he also talked in all their homes (Acts 20:20) giving us the example of gospel sharing as a together experience of talking, looking, praying, and traveling. Following Christ daily in our home while intentionally sharing our home and reaching out to others, is not complicated and provides a constant setting for platforming the gospel. This week, we are praying for Rock the Block, an outreach coordinated by our children's ministry that involves families opening our homes for Backyard Bible Clubs.

God's involvement in our lives is ongoing, and He uses our lives as we live them out following Christ. He appeared to Paul for the purpose of opening people's eyes as he shared and showed the Word to them (Acts 26:15, 16, 22), and we, like Paul, have the help that comes from God because the Holy Spirit lives in us. When we begin to ask God for lives to be changed as we have witnessed in the Book of Acts, we will begin to see God answering our prayers in visible ways too!

Discuss

Use the following questions to review the Head (What does God want me to know?), Heart (What does God want me to value?), and Hands (What does God want me to do?) aspects of the message.

- Read Acts 1:4-5. When you consider Jesus' command to the disciples simply to *wait* after He ascended, do you think that was a difficult thing for them to obey? Why or why not? Is it difficult or easy for us to wait on the Holy Spirit as well today?
- How does the degree to which you are captivated with Jesus (as the disciples were when He ascended) affect the way you Share the Word and Show the Word?
- Why are we prone to promote ourselves rather than truly showing the Word of God?
- Why is it impossible to align our self with Jesus' pattern if we fail to choose the right starting point—spending time in His Word?
- As you consider the life interaction between Paul, the disciples, and Jesus' other followers in the Book of Acts, are you encouraged or convicted?

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- Have you found the “togetherness” Pastor Chris pointed out in Acts, or are you still longing for it? Are there any adjustments you need to make in your life to value “togetherness” in the gospel?
- What excuses do people offer for failing to open their homes to neighbors and other people? Which one are you most likely to use? Is it legitimate?
- Have you ever been part of a Backyard Bible Club such as Rock the Block? If so, what was that experience like? How did you see God working in others’ lives—and your own? Was the house important or what happened through relationships?
- How can we tend to overcomplicate ministry? What advice would you offer to someone close to you who was doing just that?
- How do commitments like Rock the Block require both easy simplicity and difficult boldness?
- How did Paul’s awareness of his purpose (Acts 26:15, 16, 22) fuel his passion to spread the gospel and take risks for the gospel?
- In what ways can you already praise God for using your life to Show the Word to others?
- In what ways do you need to grow in grace as you seek to Show the Word more?

Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.

Weekly Prayer Focus . . . (from the worship guide)

- ***Lives and Church: Ask God to give you a heart that cherishes the gospel in such a way that your thoughts, actions, and affections are completely transformed.***
- ***Local: This week we are praying for Rock the Block, our backyard Bible club outreach, and Deerfoot Baptist Church, Pastor Roger Willmore. Our emphasis week for Rock the Block this summer will be June 6—9, but small groups are free to host Backyard Bible Clubs any week that works best for them during the months of June and July. For more information, visit the kiosk in the lobby.***
- ***Global: Pray this week for the Sullivan family in East Asia. (The Sullivans receive mid-term teams from Brook Hills.) We are also praying for Brook Hills teams in Australia and the Middle East.***

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