

Small Group Guide

DISCIPLE-MAKING: SERVE THE WORLD

The Church at Brook Hills,
1:1-10

Dr. David Platt

April 17, 2011

Acts 17:1-9, 1 Thessalonians

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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Acts

The Church That Turns The World Upside Down...

- We exist to _____ exalt _____ the glory of God. (Acts 17:3)
 - The gospel is our _____ foundation _____.
 - We have been _____ chosen _____ by the Father. (Acts 17:4)
 - We have been _____ crucified _____ with the Son. (Acts 17:5-6)
 - We have been _____ changed _____ by the Spirit. (Acts 17:5)
 - The gospel is our _____ motivation _____. (1 Thess. 1:3)
 - Our faith is producing _____ work _____.
 - We have been saved from work...
 - Fueled by the _____ flesh _____ that does not honor God.
 - We have been saved to work...
 - Fueled by _____ faith _____ that brings great glory to God.
 - Our love is producing _____ labor _____.

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- Our hope is producing endurance .
- The gospel is our ambition .
- We want this gospel to be known all over the globe . (1 Thess. 1:8)
- We want our Savior to come back for His people . (1 Thess. 1:10, Mt. 24:14)

- We live to make disciples .
 - We are a fellowship of disciple-makers, not an audience of spectators .
 - Let's share the Word so that others will receive it. (1 Thess. 1:5-6)
 - Let's show the Word so that others will follow it. (1 Thess. 1:5-7)
 - Biblical community and biblical mission are inseparable .
 - Let's teach the Word so that others will spread it. (1 Thess. 1:6, 8)
 - Let's serve the world so that together with others, we will eventually reach the world.

- We die to multiply churches .
 - Their homes were central .
 - Their strategy was simple . (Acts 14)
 - Their cost was steep .
 - Their reward was great . (1 Thes. 2:19, 3:8)

 - Let's go everywhere ...
 - To unreached areas overseas.
 - To under-reached areas in North America.
 - Throughout metro Birmingham.
 - Let's involve everyone ...
 - If we are all involved in making disciples, we will all be involved in multiplying churches.

The Bottom Line...

- God is sovereign over the Great Commission.
- We are responsible for the Great Commission.
 - Let's give Him a blank check with our lives .
 - Let's give Him a blank check with our church .
 - Let's lose our lives accomplishing this mission.

World evangelization...is a divinely ordered goal for every Christian. Not only is it attainable; it is inevitable. Whether or not we believe it, someday the gospel of the Kingdom will be heard to the ends of the earth (Mt. 24:14). The God of the universe will not be defeated in His purpose. Any activity not in step with His design for human destiny is an exercise in futility. The sooner we realize this and align our way with His, the sooner we will be relevant to eternity.

Robert Coleman

Message Summary

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The church in Thessalonica was begun in the midst of opposition against the men who had “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6) who were now making disciples in Thessalonica. Paul and Silas had preached the powerful message of the gospel, and people responded. The church that formed as a result of the gospel being preached there was birthed out of a disciple-making mission, which continued with the church there making disciples themselves. The gospel had been the foundation of their existence, and it was the motivation for their mission work.

The same is true of Christ-followers today. Although believers do not and cannot work to earn the favor of God, His work of salvation in their lives produces a faith that desires to bring glory to God—spurring them on to be a part of His work in the world. The biblical mandate for all believers is to be involved in making disciples of all nations by sharing, showing, and teaching the Word to the whole world (serving the world). In light of this call, each person and family must ask God how He desires to use their lives for His glory and offer Him complete freedom (a blank check) to use our lives however He wants, despite what that may cost or require.

Discuss

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

- How has our 21st Century church culture often switched our call to follow Christ from one of self-denial into one of self-preservation? How do we cheat the gospel when we present it that way?
- What does our culture as a whole value in terms of a legacy? What should we, as Christ-followers, value in terms of leaving a legacy?
- In thinking about leaving a spiritual legacy, how are you entrusting the gospel to others as Paul did? What churches could be started if we made an intentional investment in the life of another?
- What kinds of things do we need to know in order to disciple another believer? How can we begin to prepare ourselves to disciple others well?
- How can we pray for either someone to disciple us or for someone to disciple (or both)?
- Paul was what is referred to as a “bi-vocational minister.” He worked as a tentmaker while spreading the gospel. How can we use our jobs or careers as an integral part of our ministry to spread the gospel?
- How could God use our specific skills, experiences, and talents to spread the gospel around the globe?
- What resources do we have available that we can use to help make disciples in Birmingham?
- According to Acts, what are the essentials for a church family to exist?
- How do all of our programs and resources in the North American church affect the way that the world may view God's Church--good or bad?
- What are we willing to sacrifice in terms of our own comforts, preferences, or traditions so that we can most effectively make disciples through our church?
- What are we willing to sacrifice in terms of our own security so that we can most effectively make disciples with our lives and through our families?
- What is holding us back from giving God a blank check? What do we fear about His character? What do we fear about His calling?
- What would our lives look like if we held onto nothing but that which will last for eternity?

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?

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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)

- ***Local:*** This week we are praying for Ossie Ware Mitchell Middle School. OWMMS is a 6th-8th grade school in the Birmingham City School District located in East Lake, AL. We are also praying for Asbury Methodist, Kip Laxson, Pastor.
- ***Global:*** This week we are praying for the church and people of Japan.
- ***Lives and Church:*** Pray this week that you would be captivated by the glory and beauty of God in all His attributes.