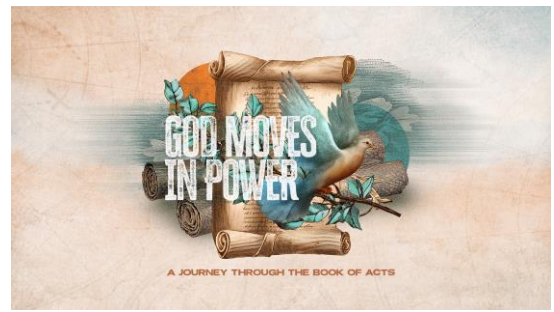


Group Discussion Guide | Sep 20
God Moves in Power through Central India Christian
Mission



Series overview and leader instructions

Overview

Our current sermon series, “God Moves in Power,” is a journey through the book of Acts, where we witness the Holy Spirit at work through prayer, the gospel, the Church, and ordinary people. As we explore the story of the early church, we’ll discover that the same God who moved powerfully then is still moving today. This series will challenge and encourage us to live with bold faith, expectant prayer, and a willingness to join God’s ongoing mission in the world. The story of Acts is far from over, and we’re invited to be a part of it.

Note: This series will be a thematic walk through the Book of Acts rather than a chapter-by-chapter or verse-by-verse study.

Bible Lab

Each week, in addition to sermon discussion questions, groups are invited to participate in “Bible Lab,” an interactive Scripture reading experience. Your group will read a different text each time you gather, but the questions you ask will be the same, inviting you to consider what you notice about God, humanity, and yourself in each passage. By providing the same questions each week, we hope to offer a Bible-reading strategy that puts the emphasis first on God and the church/others before drawing a personal application.

It could be tempting for your group to skip the Bible Lab, but we *strongly* encourage you to engage with it each week, allowing God’s Word to form your group and each person in it.

Reading Plan

We have created a reading plan to accompany this sermon series. You can find it here: [Acts Series Resources](#). You can download the reading plan or subscribe to receive the daily devotional guide each week, which contains the reading plan and reflection questions.

Consider committing to completing the reading plan as a group. Here are questions you can use (during your life group time, over a meal, or however you choose) to reflect on the reading plan each week:

- As you read, what resonated with you?
- What questions came up in your mind?
- What challenged you from God’s Word?

Opening reflection questions

This week we heard about the movement of God in India and Nepal.

- We wrestled with the reality that there is a purpose to persecution and unexpected disasters. When life has punched you in the gut and how have you responded? Where did you see God?
- What stories stand out to you from what Dr. Lall shared?

Bible Lab (20 minutes)

All through the God Moves in Power series, we'll be spending time each week in what we're calling "Bible Lab." Bible Lab consists of three "movements." In the first movement, we will read the passage out loud, paying attention to what is happening in the passage. In the second movement, we'll read it out loud again, noticing what it teaches about God, people, and ourselves. In the third movement, we will silently read the passage and share what next step the passage has for us.

Note: See the last page of this document for a guide you can provide your group members if desired. You could print one for each person, collect them after Bible Lab, and reuse the same guide each week.

Movement 1

Invite everyone to turn to **Acts 7:54-8:4**

The first time through, we want to get an overview. As we listen, ask yourself:

- What is going on in this passage?
- What caught your attention?
- What questions arise as you listen?

Read **Acts 7:54-8:4** out loud or invite someone else to do so. When you are finished, discuss your group's answers to the questions above. Feel free to break into groups of 2-3.

Movement 2

The second time through, we want to consider what the passage reveals about God and His people. As we listen, ask yourself:

- What does this passage show you about God? The work of the Holy Spirit?
- What do these verses reveal to us about the body of Christ, the Church?

*Read **Acts 7:54-8:4** out loud or invite someone else to do so. When you are finished, discuss your group's answers to the questions above. Feel free to break into groups of 2–3.*

Movement 3

Each of us will now take a few moments to read **Acts 7:54-8:4** silently to ourselves. As you read, prayerfully consider this question:

- Lord, what are You inviting me to believe, receive, or do in response to this passage?

Allow time for everyone to read and reflect. Then invite anyone who would like to share a brief response.

*When the time of sharing is done, pray a short prayer. You may use these words based on James 1:22 or something similar: **"Lord, thank You for this time in Your Word. May we not merely listen to the word and so deceive ourselves. May we do what it says. And may we encourage each other in that pursuit. Amen."***

Discussion of sermon and Scripture (20 minutes)

Beginning in Acts 4, the apostles faced ongoing persecution. They were brought in for questioning, accused, released, arrested again, and flogged.

In Acts 7 things escalated. A newly appointed leader, Stephen, became the first Christian to be killed for his belief (martyred). Gary laid out Stephen's story for us a couple of weeks ago.

In Acts 8, the persecution became rampant.

- How did the church respond?

Most of us don't face physical persecution as a response to our belief in Jesus. We try to understand based on stories in the Bible or from people like Dr. Lall, but we can feel very disconnected from it.

- What do you think and feel when you hear stories of modern-day persecution against Christians?
- What makes it hard to hear?
- How do you desire to respond?

What is the purpose of persecution? In Stephen's case, Saul's fierce persecution of the church led to a dramatic experience that caused him to convert (Acts 9) his passion toward Jesus and prove that Jesus is the Messiah (v 20-22).

Then in Acts 11:19, the persecution of Stephen is directly connected to the gospel being spread to a city in another country, Antioch (modern Turkey), where the disciples were called Christians for the first time (11:19-26).

The persecution of Stephen was not wasted; it was fuel.

- How did Dr. Lall describe the purpose of persecution he and other pastors in India have faced?
- How does this fuel their passion and actions? Where does it send them?
- How can someone else's persecution in another country fuel you?
- How can persecution *you* face fuel you?

Another major point that Dr. Lall made Sunday was that this world is not our home (1 Chronicles 29:15, 1 Peter 2:11, Hebrews 11:13, 2 Corinthians 5:1) and that our life is short (Psalm 90:12, Job 14:1-2, James 4:14, Psalm 39:4-5).

Life can feel hard at times. You may not face persecution, but we all face tough times, and sometimes we are reminded vividly that life is fragile, and our time may be short.

- What does the reminder that life is short and that this world is not our home mean for you?

- How does this reminder affect the experience of your current circumstances?
- What does it mean for your future?

Prayer and upcoming events (15 minutes)

As we approach our prayer time tonight, let's pause and consider what we are praying for and why. Take a few moments to think about what we can be praying for fervently and how we can ask God for what we long for in a way that also considers how His kingdom is being advanced.

Allow a few moments for silent reflection.

What can we pray about in each other's lives tonight?

How can those prayers advance God's kingdom in the face of persecution or difficult times?

Gather prayer requests. Consider asking different members of the group to earnestly pray for each request, then pause to allow others to pray for that request as well. At the end of each prayer, you may wish to invite people to repeat Job's words: "May the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21).

Remember that silence is OK, and that every person is on his or her own journey in prayer. Some people are more comfortable than others. But some people just need a little time and space to gather thoughts.

Upcoming events

The Fall Family Block Party is Sunday, September 27 from 4-7. Who can you invite?

Bible Lab Questions

The following may be used to guide each week's Bible Lab time.

Movement 1

The first time through this week's Scripture, we want to get an overview. As we listen, ask yourself:

- What is going on in this passage?
- What caught your attention?
- What questions arise as you listen?

Listen as the passage is read out loud then discuss your answers to the questions above.

Movement 2

The second time through, we want to consider what the passage reveals about God and His people. As we listen, ask yourself:

- What does this passage show you about God? The work of the Holy Spirit?
- What do these verses reveal to us about the body of Christ, the Church?

Listen as the passage is read out loud then discuss your answers to the questions above.

Movement 3

Each of us will now take a few moments to read the passage silently to ourselves. As you read, prayerfully consider this question:

- Lord, what are You inviting me to believe, receive, or do in response to this passage?

After a time of reflection, everyone will be given the opportunity to share their response.