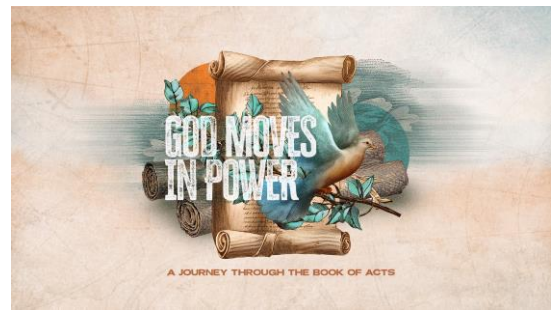


Group Discussion Guide | September 6
God Moves in Power through the Gospel



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 (10 minutes)

This week we encounter the sermon and martyrdom of Stephen in Acts 6–7.

- Stephen finds himself in an intense situation where his life is literally in danger. When you're in danger or under stress, how do you tend to respond: fight, flight, freeze, or fawn?
- Have you ever been put in the position of explaining or defending your faith in Jesus to a hostile person or group? What was it like?

Bible Lab (20 minutes)

All through the God Moves in Power sermon 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 7:48-60**.*

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 7:48-60 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 7:48-60 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 7:48-60 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)

Stephen's story begins with a conflict in the church—the resources for widows weren't being distributed fairly or equally. Stephen, Philip, and others were appointed to fill the role of caring for those in need so that the Apostles could focus on "the ministry of the word of God" (Acts 6:2). As a result, the word of God spread, and the number of disciples increased rapidly (Acts 6:7). As the church grew, believers needed to step into serving roles for ministry to function smoothly.

- What are some of the roles you've served in at The Creek or other churches? What impact did your service have on the health of the church and/or the increase in disciples?
- Are there ways you would like to serve that you haven't tried yet?

There is clearly something remarkable about Stephen. Acts 6:8 says that he was "a man full of God's grace and power." Later, Luke writes that he speaks with "the wisdom of the Spirit" (Acts 6:10) and that "his face was like the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15). Yet he enrages the leaders who arrest him and bring him to trial.

- Why does the message of the gospel draw some people in and make other people so angry?
- As you listened to the sermon and spent time with the passage, what stood out to you about Stephen's response to his accusers?

Gary said that Stephen had G.R.I.T.: Grace, Relationship with God, Impact, and Truth.

Stephen had **grace** and a posture of forgiveness, even as he was being executed (Acts 7:60). He, in essence, echoed Jesus' words on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

- Is there a relationship or situation in your life where you need to offer this kind of radical forgiveness?
- If you're struggling to forgive, what makes it hard? How does Stephen's story encourage you?

Stephen was a man full of the Holy Spirit. He yielded fully to the Spirit and was given power by the Spirit.

- Are you confident the Spirit is actively guiding and giving you power, as he did for Stephen?
- What does it look like for you to yield to the Spirit in a practical way?
- Do you typically find yourself cooperating with the Spirit, resisting the Spirit, or ignoring the Spirit?

Stephen's death was the beginning of a period of persecution that led to the spreading of the Gospel (Acts 8:1). His death had *impact*.

- What tragedies or difficulties have you seen lead to the spread of the gospel?
- What challenges in your own life right now might be used to draw others to Jesus?

Prayer and upcoming events (10 minutes)

Invite people to share their prayer requests and consider asking someone in the group to pray specifically for each request. Encourage people to pray that the difficulties in their life may be used to spread the Gospel.

Before people begin praying out loud, explain that you're going to provide a few moments of silence to give people an opportunity to invite the Holy Spirit to guide their prayers.

Close your prayer time by asking for the grace, relationship, impact and truth of Stephen.

Upcoming Events

- **All-Church Worship Night** on Thursday, September 17.
- **Fall Family Block Party** on Sunday, September 27. Consider signing up to serve as a life group! Sign up at thecreek.org/fallfamilyblockparty.

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.