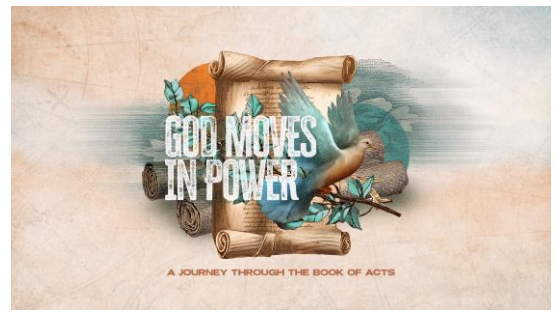




Group Discussion Guide | August 30

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 are looking at Acts 17:16-34 as Paul shares the message of Jesus with Gentiles in Athens.

- Paul encountered three responses to his message: the scoffers, the curious, and the believers. Which groups do you encounter in your life? (Work, home, neighborhood, school, etc.)
- Talk about a time you shared your faith. What was the response? Did you get to see faith make an impact on someone's life?

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 17:22-31.

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 17:22-31 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 17:22-31 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 17:22-31 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)

Paul was bold in his faith; not only did he go into the synagogue and share his faith with the Jews and God-fearing Greeks, but he also went into the marketplace, a place where people with all sorts of beliefs would be. His desire for others to hear about Jesus was greater than his fear of rejection, violence, or becoming a prisoner.

- When is it hardest for you to share your faith?
- What makes this hard for you?
- If you share your faith in this environment, what’s the worst that will happen?

Paul is distressed by the number of idols he sees in Athens. In verse 23 he even mentions an altar engraved with “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.” It is obvious that the Athenians were blinded by idols that could never give them the gift of eternal life.

- What are the specific things that have interfered with your relationship with Jesus? Be specific in your response. *Encourage people to stay away from generic answers like “my phone” or “work”; take time to recognize what about these “idols” has become more important than Jesus. Invite married people to ask their spouses if they agree or see something different—this may be a conversation you encourage couples to have privately.*
- Consider someone you can invite to hold you accountable to build parameters around these distractions. Is this something your life group can do for each other?

Paul’s life was radically changed when he had an encounter with Jesus. He desired for others to experience what he had discovered.

- Share how your life has changed since you surrendered it to Jesus.

- Do you have family or friends, maybe even those who need extra grace, who need Jesus? How can you share your faith with them?

Dan wrapped up this week's sermon pointing out how Paul used four foundational building blocks that address the most important issue for each human, whether ancient Athenians or modern Americans:

1. Origin – How we got here (Acts 17:24-26)
 2. Purpose – Why we're here (Acts 17:27)
 3. Identity – What it means to be human (Acts 17:28)
 4. Destiny – What happens when we die (Acts 17:31)
- Which one of these four—origin, purpose identity, destiny—is your biggest consideration in following Jesus?
 - Paul encountered the mockers, the curious, and the believers. Which one of these three have you been in your life? What are you now?
 - Identify one way your belief in Jesus has shaped your life—how is your life different because you follow Him?

Prayer and upcoming events (15 minutes)

Tonight, as we enter our prayer time, sit in silence for a few moments, taking time to let the evening's conversation sink in. Reflect upon how Jesus has changed your life. Recognize the things that are taking more time and energy than your relationship with Jesus. Think of those around you who need Jesus.

Gather prayer requests or invite people to “pray their requests” by sharing their requests in prayer. Pray especially for those in your life who need Jesus.

Ask your group to say a prayer of thanksgiving, for strength to overcome distractions, and boldness to share your faith with those who don't know Him.

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.