

Small Group Study

Our Vision

To know God and enjoy Him forever.

Our Mission

To build a Christian community by making fully devoted disciples of non-religious and nominally religious people



Discussion

Power with Purpose: Win some, Lose some - Awesome!

Scripture

Have volunteers read the following scripture:

Acts 14:1-20 (NIV)

1 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. 2 But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3 So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. 4 The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. 5 There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. 6 But they found out about it, and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, 7 where they continued to preach the good news.

8 In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. 9 He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed 10 and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

11 When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" 12 Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. 13 The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

14 But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: 15 "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. 16 In the past, he let all nations go their own way. 17 Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." 18 Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

Ice Breaker

Use ONE of the questions to help people open up and to focus your meeting. It is very helpful to go around in a circle with the leader going first. (Remember if you have new members or guests you should take time to introduce everyone.)

- 1.** What games do you typically win at? What games do you typically lose at?
- 2.** What's the biggest lie you ever told someone?
- 3.** Has anyone ever mistaken you for someone else? Tell us about it.

19 Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. 20 But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

Questions

I. It is the will of God that all people be saved:

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV) *3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*

2 Peter 3:9 *9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

However, some will HEAR and believe:

Acts 14:1 *1 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.*

Some will SEE and believe:

Acts 14:3 *3 So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.*

And some will choose to disbelieve:

Acts 19:8-10 *8 Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. 9 But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10 This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.*

Acts 28:24 *24 Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.*

Jesus illustrated this principle in the following parable:

Luke 8:4-8 *8 While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: 5 "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. 6 Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown." When he said this, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."*

What can we learn from this parable and from what we read in Acts 14:1-20? If the people in the Jewish synagogue in Iconium heard a sermon preached by none other than the apostle Paul, and many of them STILL did not believe, what does that tell us?

2. Look at Acts 19:8-10 (above) again. Even though many in the synagogue refused to believe, Paul spent three months there arguing persuasively for the Kingdom of God. He spent two more years having daily discussions in the lecture hall in Tyrannus so that all the Jews and Greeks would have the opportunity to hear the word of the Lord. How can we be more successful in leading people to Christ? How can we be more persistent in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ?

3. One way in which we can become more successful in leading people to Christ is by learning to speak more effectively.

Proverbs 10:31 *31 The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but a perverse tongue will be cut out.*

Colossians 4:5-6 *5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

1 Peter 3:15 *15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.*

How can our conversation always be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that we know how to answer everyone? How can we be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope that we have?

4. Another way we can become more successful in leading people to Christ is by learning to give people our time and be patient with them.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 (NLT) *24 A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. 25 Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth.*

In what situations are you apt to be impatient with people? Who are the “difficult people” in your life with whom you need to be more patient?

5. Another thing we need to do in order to successfully lead people to Christ is this: we need to learn how to identify those people who are seeking the truth.

Proverbs 9:7-9 (NLT)

7 *Anyone who rebukes a mocker will get an insult in return.*

Anyone who corrects the wicked will get hurt.

8 *So don't bother correcting mockers;*

they will only hate you.

But correct the wise,

and they will love you.

9 *Instruct the wise,*

and they will be even wiser.

Teach the righteous,

and they will learn even more.

Matthew 7:6 (NIV) *Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.*

How can we learn to identify those who are hungry for the truth?

6. In order to lead people to Christ we also need to look for every opportunity to do so.

Ephesians 5:15-16 (NLT) *15 So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. 16 Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.*

What are some opportunities in your life where you can share Christ? Is it at work? Sports? Kids' events? And how would you do that practically?

7. Finally, be sincere. Be real.

2 Corinthians 2:17 (NIV) *Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.*

Some quotes about being sincere and authentic...

"I can't hear your words because they are drowned out by your actions" - Ralph Waldo Emerson

"If you would convince a man that he does wrong, do right. Men will believe what they see." - Henry David Thoreau

"You must be the change you want to see in the world." - Mahatma Gandhi

Take a moment to examine any inconsistencies in your life--areas in your life where your actions don't speak as loudly as your words. It's ok. We all have them. It is a sign of emotional and spiritual maturity though to be honest with one-self about areas in which we need to grow. ...maybe even areas of hypocrisy in our lives that we need to deal with. Can you think of any? Can the group pray for you about it? Can we help you develop a plan to change it? Can we ask you the next time we meet what steps you took to begin to deal with it?

God bless,

Roger Sodsod

Small Group Pastor

email: rsodsod@vineyardkcnorth.com