



SPOKEN.

WHEN WORDS CHANGE THE WORLD

Week 3 (September 20-26): Lesson Guide

Open In Prayer

Welcome/Introductions

Ask the group to recall the guidelines for discussion that we use to create a safe environment.

Ask someone to retell last week's story from Mark 5:1-20 (Jesus frees the demoniac).

Ask someone on your team to read the Hook Question – Ask, “How have you experienced God’s love for you through His church?”

Ask someone from your team to read or tell the following background for the story:

For some of our group veterans, this story will be familiar. However, this story is also a foundational story because it is the first time that the word “church” is mentioned in the New Testament. Whether you have heard this story before or this is your first time, listen to what the Lord wants to teach you about His promises and direction for His church.

Today’s story takes place towards the end of Jesus’ ministry on the earth. Jesus had some things to teach His disciples, so he took them on a retreat. They traveled together up to Caesarea-Philippi. Caesarea-Philippi was a pagan city that displayed and worshipped many false gods. They also had a large cave opening in the center of their town that water flowed into. The scientists of the day wanted to find out where the water ran, so they performed several tests. In spite of their efforts, no one was able to find out where the water went! A local superstition developed – this cave and waterway was a gate to hell. Jesus constantly used His surroundings to teach His disciples about the Kingdom way. With the picture in your mind of a town with several gods displayed and a cave called “the gate to hell”, you are ready to learn today’s story...

Tell the story from Matthew 16:13-18

Rebuild the story – (Group members tell the story based on what they remember)

Read Matthew 16:13-18 – (Ask the group to read these scriptures)

Discuss these questions:

- What do you like about this story?
- Is there anything you dislike about this story?
- What does this story teach us about God?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- How do you relate to this story?
- What do you need to change based on this story?

Ask for a volunteer to retell the story one last time.

Ask for a volunteer to tell the story next week.

Prayer Requests (ask someone in the group to take notes so you can email the requests to the group)

Pray (don't feel the need to mention every request in prayer again, just pray for the group and send the email)

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Week 3: Coaching Guide

Leading [learn to facilitate your group more effectively]

- In our church, we agree and believe that discipleship happens most effectively in the context of a group. We believe this because this is how Jesus and the early church made disciples.
 - We believe the church is: A local body of baptized believers... joined together under biblical leadership... to grow in the likeness of Christ... who express the love of Christ to one another... and work as a team to make disciples of Jesus (definition adopted from David Platt's book *Follow Me*).
- Based on our shared belief about the church making disciples together, our coaching guide will shift focus this week from understanding ground rules to our four pillars for group discipleship...
 - The first pillar of group discipleship is having a biblical foundation. This means that everything we do to make disciples as a team revolves around God's Word.
 - One of the most practical ways we accomplish this objective in group is through storying. The stories of God's Word are memorable, and therefore effective in moving the Word of God from the pages of the Bible to the hearts and minds of disciples.
 - Another way to rely on God's Word in group is to use the word of God to answer questions. When difficult questions arise in group, first look at the story for the week and see if God has an answer for your group through the story. Next, ask the group to help answer this question by referencing God's Word.

Shepherding [know the sheep, feed the sheep, lead the sheep, protect the sheep]

- A biblical foundation for discipleship should not be limited to your weekly meeting time slot...
 - Encourage your group to be in the Word every day. Remember, be transparent as a leader. If you have not been faithful to get into God's Word daily, be honest with your team. At the same time, come ready with a plan. Find a Bible reading plan that you are prepared to start and be committed to (try youversion.com for great plans). Encourage your team to hold each other accountable to spend time in God's Word every day.
 - As you meet one-to-one with group members or people you are discipling, use storying as part of your meeting time. This story could be the story we are using in our church this week, or any story God places on your heart. By taking time to story in a one-to-one meeting, you are making God's Word the foundation of your discipleship efforts.

Developing [grow as a disciple yourself]

- Recently, Pastor Jerry challenged our entire church by declaring that, "The Bible must become the final authority for what we believe and practice!" Is the Bible your authority for what you believe and practice?
 - In your marriage, do you honor your wife and remain sensitive to her feelings? Do you respect your husband and trust God to lead you through him?
 - In your finances, do you trust God as your provider and demonstrate your trust in Him by following His commands about giving? Do you presume upon the future, or are you a good steward of your money so that when crisis comes you have done your part?
 - Do you live in community with other believers, sharing transparently things that God is teaching you and areas of weakness that you need to be strengthened in?
 - Are you bearing faithful witness to the gospel by living out a kingdom centered life and being intentional to share Jesus with those you come in contact with?
 - Do you seek the Holy Spirit every day through prayer and through the written Word of God?
- These are just a few areas the Bible addresses that show us what we believe and how we should live. How do you expect to make biblical disciples if you are not living out the Word of God?
- In what ways do you need to repent and turn back to God's Word? Be transparent with your group leader or group coach this week. Send them a text or an email right now to set up an opportunity.