

Small Group Guide

GODLINESS AND THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. Bart Box

July 10, 2011

2 Peter 1:1-11

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Sermon Outline

What Peter Says about Godliness (vv. 1-7)

The basic point: grace brings about godliness.

- God provides entirely for godliness. (vv. 3-4)
 - His provision is personal.
 - We are transformed by the glory and excellence of Christ.
 - We are granted the precious and very great promises in Christ.
 - His provision is effective.
 - We partake of the divine nature.
 - We part ways with the world's corruption.
- We work strenuously toward godliness. (vv. 5-7)
 - Our work is reasonable in light of God's grace.
 - Our work is evident through changes in our character.

Why Godliness Matters (vv. 8-11)

- Our progress in godliness is necessary for assurance of salvation. (vv. 8-10a)
 - Fruitfulness in the gospel is an indicator of spiritual life.
 - Fruitlessness in the gospel is an indicator of spiritual death.

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- Our progress in godliness is necessary for entrance into the kingdom. (vv. 10b-11)
 - This doesn't mean that sinless perfection is required or possible.
 - This does mean that eternal salvation is at stake.

How We Should Respond

- Examine your life carefully.
- Exhort one another lovingly.
- Exalt the Savior passionately.
- Embrace the gospel wholeheartedly.

Message Summary

The grace of God, which provides salvation, also provides sufficient grace to exhibit godliness in the life of a believer. Salvation was not intended to begin and end with a one-time decision to follow Christ. A true saving experience by faith in Christ, through God's grace, propels the believer into the pursuit of a godly life. This truth does not mean that believers will cease to sin but that they strive to overcome sin through the power of God. The pursuit of godliness is not a works-based salvation; rather, it is an active effort on the part of the believer through the grace of God to become more like Him. God's grace is not an excuse for laziness; it is the catalyst that drives a changed life. Godliness is solely the effective work of God's grace but also is the active fruit of a life truly transformed by Christ. Although fully the work of God, it is also an effort by the believer to actively pursue the things of God with his heart and with his hands.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review the Head (What does God want me to know?), Heart (What does God want me to value?), and Hands (What does God want me to do?) aspects of the message.

- How does the same grace that provided faith in Christ for salvation also provide for a continuing relationship with God?
- How are salvation and transformation connected to each other? Can you have salvation without transformation?
- What do our attitudes and actions reveal about the genuine nature of our salvation?
- Some world religions believe that Christians throw their sins on Christ without accepting much, if any, responsibility for them. In what ways do we demonstrate this kind of lazy behavior in our church culture?
- Why is the desire for godliness in our lives imperative to the Kingdom of Christ?
- If godly transformation is driven by the gospel, what does a life that ignores the call to godliness value?
- Describe the interaction between God's grace in the life of a believer for the purpose of godliness and the active work of a believer in pursuing godliness.
- What is our responsibility regarding the pursuit of a godly life?
- Peter focused on the transforming attitude of a believer over his or her activity. How do we often switch the priority of these two?
- Why is it important to focus on both godly attitude and godly action?
- Through the power and grace of God, what are some practical things that we can do to begin to alter our attitudes so that they become aligned with the "mind of Christ"?
- How do we identify what actions need to change—added, removed? How do we begin to change those once they are identified?
- How can we help one another to display godly attitudes and actions without becoming legalistic?
- What is our role in helping others to see areas of weakness and grow stronger in them?

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Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.

Weekly Prayer Focus . . . (from the worship guide)

- **Lives and Church:** Spend time in prayer this week thanking God that His grace has given you the power you need to live a holy life.
- **Local:** This week we are praying for various outreach initiatives associated with Marks Village. We are also praying for Bethel Baptist of Collegeville, Thomas Wilder, Jr., Pastor.
- **Global:** This week we are praying for our long-term missionaries, the Mayottes, in South Africa. We are also praying for Brook Hills teams in Guatemala, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic.