

Small Group Guide

GODLINESS AND THE DENIAL OF CHRIST

The Church at Brook Hills
2:1-22

Dr. Bart Box

July 24, 2011

2 Peter

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

Godliness and the Denial of Christ 2 Peter 2:1-22

Some Initial Cautions Concerning False Teachers...

- Don't expand the category of false teachers unnecessarily.
 - We must distinguish between false teachers and misguided ones.
 - We must remember that not every doctrine is of first importance.
- Don't empty the category of false teachers uncritically.
 - We should recognize the Bible's attention to false teachers.
 - We should remember the Bible's advice on false teachers.
 - Flee from them.
 - Learn from them.

What We Learn About False Teachers...

- Their way is deception.
 - Their manner is deceptive.
 - Their message is deceptive.
- Their end is destruction.
 - For themselves.

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- For their followers.
- For the church.
- Their need is transformation.
 - They are enslaved to the pleasures of this world.
 - They are lacking in the fruit of the gospel.

What We Learn From False Teachers...

- We learn the value of biblical community.
- We learn the danger of superficial reformation.
- We learn the power of gospel transformation.
 - *God, by your grace, may we never be a people adrift from your Word, denying the supremacy of Christ, lacking the fruit of the gospel, blaspheming the way of righteousness, enslaved to the pleasures of the world, awaiting the condemnation of our souls.*
 - *God, by your grace, may we always be a people anchored to your Word, exalting the supremacy of Christ, exhibiting the fruit of the gospel, adorning the way of righteousness, free from the pleasures of this world, awaiting the salvation of our souls.*

Message Summary

1 Peter 2:1-22 records a harsh message about the destruction ahead for false teachers. It cautions believers the need to not heed everything everyone is teaching. However, Bart cautioned us not to expand the category of false teachers unnecessarily, realizing that some teachers are simply misguided in issues that are not of first importance. At the same time, believers should be careful not to empty the category of false teachers without testing them against God's Word, recognizing that the Bible gives attention to false teachers (1 Peter 2, 1 Tim. 4:1) and offers advice for believers to flee from them and learn from their mistakes.

The way of false teachers is deception. They are known for giving outward evidence of a relationship with Christ, yet in secret their way of life denies Him. Their end is destruction for themselves, their followers, and the church because they drag the world away from Christ and destroy the witness of the truth. Ultimately, their need is personal transformation. Enslaved to the pleasures of this world and lacking in true gospel fruit, these people are consumed with self—power, sex, and money—and give no one authority over their lives, not even God.

From these false teachers, we learn three main truths. First, there is great value in biblical community, so we desperately need to pray for our teachers—for their lives and for their teaching. There is great need for biblical teachers to be known by their followers, that others may closely watch their lives. We also learn the danger of superficial reformation. Just as false teachers appear to follow Christ but fail to encounter Him and truly be transformed on the inside, we, too, must guard against professing to have Christ's truth without demonstrating it within our own life. Finally, we learn the power of true gospel transformation. We all say something about the gospel by the way we live our lives and teach God's Word. All believers must examine what people see when they look at our lives—whether we are enslaved to worldly pleasures or give glory to God's transforming grace, exalting Christ as the one who has freed us from our sin.

Discuss

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

- How would you explain to someone what a false teacher is and is not?
- Have you ever been guilty of either “expanding the category of false teachers unnecessarily” or of “emptying the category of false teachers uncritically”? How might that possibly happen today?

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- Dr. Box noted that one sure sign of a false teacher is that his or her message denies the judgment of Christ. Can you have the gospel without judgment? Why is a message that omits judgment so enticing? How does the reality of judgment change the way you live?
- How do the truths in this message change the way you value teachers who are committed to truth?
- How does being anchored in God's Word help you evaluate the teaching you hear? How can you become more anchored in His Word so that you'll recognize 'false teachers' when you hear or meet them?
- Read Peter's description of false teachers in 2 Peter 2:10-22. What things consume false teachers?
- Why would these things not consume true teachers of the Word?
- Why is it important to pray for the teachers in your life?
- Why is it essential that those being taught be in community with other strong believers?
- Why is it essential that those being taught truly know their teacher's lives? Can that happen well from a distance? What was the example of Jesus and Paul concerning those they were discipling?
- What does it mean to have a "superficial reformation"?
- Why is it important to evaluate your own reformation in light of the question, "Am I set free?" What are you set free from?
- What do you—your way of life and your teaching—say about the gospel to those around you? How might it possible for us to 'blaspheme the way of truth' too?
- What do people see when they look at your life / our small group? Are you/we enslaved to the world's pleasures? Is your life / our group confessing Jesus as Lord? What gospel fruit should people see in order for us to confess Jesus as Lord?
- Read the last two paragraphs in italics on the message notes. What practical steps can you take as a group to encourage each other to live out this prayer?

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/desire?
- How do your values/desires need to change to align with His values and desires?
- 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:** *Pray that we will be a people that holds on to the truth of the gospel. Commit yourself to praying for those who have fallen away from the truth, while also praying for the Elders who have been raised up to protect and lead our faith family.*
- **Local:** *This week we are praying for First Light, a non-profit ministry focused on serving homeless women and their children. We are also praying for Hilldale Baptist Church, Ron Pate, Pastor.*

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- **Global:** *This week we are praying for John and Amy Crawford, Brook Hills church planters to Kansas City. We are also praying for Brook Hills Short-Term teams in East Asia and Seattle.*