

Small Group Guide

UNDESERVING SINNERS UNITED AND SUSTAINED BY UNFATHOMABLE MERCY

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

August 14, 2011

1 Timothy 1:3-20

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

UNDESERVING SINNERS UNITED AND SUSTAINED BY UNFATHOMABLE MERCY

1 Timothy 1:3-20

TWO REMINDERS FROM LAST WEEK ...

We want our worship to be God-centered.

- Essential components of our worship...
 - Adoration, Confession, Instruction, Communion, Intercession, Commission
- Central characteristics of our worship...
 - Divine Revelation, Community Participation, Reverent Affection, Dedicated Attention

We want our community to be Gospel-formed.

TWO REALITIES FOR THIS WEEK...

What unites us in the church is not style of worship or songs in worship;
what unites us in the church is salvation through the gospel.

What sustains us as the church is not a certain pastor or a certain program;
what sustains us as the church is perseverance in the gospel.

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- We guard _____ the gospel. (1 Timothy 1:3)
 - How NOT to use God's law... (1 Timothy 1:4-5)
 - We must not add to the law's _____ demands _____.
 - We must not think that the law _____ saves _____.
 - This produces... (1 Timothy 1:7)
 - _____ Arrogance _____ and ignorance among those who teach.
 - _____ Confusion _____ and deception among those who hear.
 - How to use God's law...
 - To show God's _____ restraint _____ of sin. (1 Timothy 1:8-9)
 - To show God's _____ condemnation _____ of the sinner.
 - To show God's _____ will _____ for the saved.
 - This produces...
 - _____ Responsibility _____ among those who teach. (1 Timothy 1:4)
 - _____ Love _____ among those who hear. (1 Timothy 1:5)
- We celebrate _____ the gospel. (1 Timothy 1:3)
 - The gospel of God is... (1 Timothy 1:12-17)
 - Incarnational, yet _____ undeniable _____.
 - Universal, yet _____ personal _____.
 - The grace of God is...
 - _____ Unconditional _____ (1 Timothy 1:13)
 - Purposeful. (1 Timothy 1:16)
 - It demonstrates God's _____ patience _____.
 - It leads to God's _____ praise _____ (1 Timothy 1:17)
 - The glory of God is...
 - Royal and _____ eternal _____.
 - Invisible and _____ incomparable _____.
- We _____ fight for the gospel. (1 Timothy 1:18-20)
 - In our _____ lives _____.
 - In the _____ church _____.

Message Summary

The purpose of Paul's letter to Timothy is summed up in 1 Timothy 3:15—to address how one should act in the church, which is to be a “pillar and buttress of truth.” The church at Ephesus was struggling, and Paul's first priority in addressing its problems and how the church should act in the midst of them was to point out what mattered most: the gospel and the church's faithfulness to it. Perseverance in the gospel is the unifying factor in the church—not music styles, pastors, staff leaders, programs, or comforts. Because it is a vital part of the health and effectiveness of the church, we must guard against false teaching—both adding to and taking away from God's Word—particularly regarding sin and salvation. In response to salvation we must celebrate God's Word as loving boundaries and instruction for how we can relate to God and please Him. In the church and in our lives, we must fight for the purity of the gospel and its profound call in our lives to glorify God.

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.

- What happens to a body of believers that is not united around the unchanging gospel of Christ? What are the dangers of uniting around staff, programs, music elements, or other comforts?
- How have our attitudes toward peripheral elements de-valued the purpose of the gospel in the life of the church?
- How do we intentionally or unintentionally detract from the sufficiency of the gospel by adding to it? How do we intentionally or unintentionally detract from the holiness of the gospel and the mercy of God by downplaying God's teaching about sin?

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- How does God's Word simultaneously show us our failures and God's will for our obedience?
- Why is God's revelation and Law in His Word an act of love to a sinful people?
- What are the responsibilities of those who teach in the church?
- What are the responsibilities of those who sit under teachers in the church?
- What does it say of our hearts if we are unmoved by the trustworthy gospel that Jesus came to earth to save sinners?
- How can we celebrate the gospel and the unconditional grace of God in our lives? In our families? In our small group?
- Paul stated that his salvation was for God's purpose. Why do some people in our culture believe that salvation is for their own benefit alone? How does this truth affect the way we view God's grace in the gospel?
- How does the purposeful nature of our salvation impact the way that we view our role in God's mission?
- How do we praise God by fighting for the purity and priority of the gospel in our lives? In our churches?
- What does it look like to make the gospel the center of our lives?

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:** Celebrate the gospel in prayer and cling to the grace by which we were once saved and by which we not live. Pray also for those you know who have not received this grace, that God might be merciful to them.
- **Local:** This week we are praying for Discovery Club, a free, after-school program that meets once a week to teach kids about the gospel. We are also praying for Mountain Brook Baptist, James Moesbe, Pastor.
- **Global:** There are many unique opportunities to make disciples of all nations. This week, pray through the Short-term trip list and ask God to guide you and your small group to the opportunity where he will use you in 2012.