

Small Group Guide

THE GLORY OF THE TRIUNE GOD

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

August 26, 2012

Revelation 4-5

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and 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 with 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 review 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 for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

Message Outline

The Portrait of God...

- God the Father...
 - He sits at the center of the universe.
 - He dwells in unapproachable light.
 - He is surrounded by unending praise.
 - He is the Judge of every man.
 - He tempers wrath with mercy.
 - He is holy above all.
 - He has power over all.
 - He is infinitely timeless.
 - He is infinitely glorious.
 - He is supreme above all things.
 - He is the sustainer of all things.
 - He is sovereign over all things.
- God the Son...
 - He is the conquering Lion.
 - He is the slaughtered Lamb.
 - His worth is undisputed.
 - His work is unforgettable.

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- His worship is universal.
- God the Spirit...
 - He is omnipresent.
 - He is omniscient.
 - He is omnipotent.
 - He enacts judgment.
 - He enables salvation.
- The Mystery of the Trinity...
 - God is three persons.
 - Each person is fully God.
 - There is one God.

The Point for Us...

- The glory of God compels us to receive salvation.
 - God holds the future glorification of believers in His hand.
 - God holds the final damnation of unbelievers in His hand.
 - Cry out for the mercy of Christ or collapse under the judgment of Christ.
- The glory of God empowers us to escape temptation.
 - We overcome idolatry by glimpsing a greater God.
 - We fight immorality through fulfillment in our Father.
 - We refuse to compromise in light of the example of Christ.
 - We resist complacency in view of the excellency of Christ.
- The glory of God enables us to endure tribulation.
 - Our God is in control.
 - Our enemy has been conquered.
 - Our suffering will one day conclude.
- The glory of God motivates us to accomplish mission.
 - Let's pray passionately.
 - Let's give sacrificially.
 - Let's go confidently.
 - Let's die willingly.

Message Summary

In his address to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3, Jesus admonishes and encourages His churches to stand fast in their faith during suffering, turn from their sin, and boldly preach the gospel in the midst of persecution. With the scene in Revelation 4-5, the Apostle John displays the lens through which His people must view all of life by painting a portrait of the Lord God Almighty as holy, powerful, timeless, sovereign, Creator, worthy of worship, and Judge. It is through this glorious truth of God that all believers see their purpose and mission. The Triune God sits at the center of the universe, with the destiny of the world held in His sovereign hand. Recognizing that everything revolves around God, Christians are empowered to recognize themselves as sinners, to escape temptation, to endure tribulation, and to accomplish His mission.

Group Discussion

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- How does John's description of the throne in heaven and the One who sits on it, give a picture of the glorious power and sovereignty of God?
- Knowing that everything in the universe revolves around God should bring us freedom, but it can, instead, leave us feeling as if our pride has been hurt. What does this reaction reveal about an unbiblical view of ourselves? What prideful attitudes need to change in order to fully worship God, the Judge, Creator, and Redeemer of the universe?

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- In Revelation 5:1, the scroll signifies God's plan and sovereign will for the world and His redemption of it. How are His sovereignty, power, and wisdom over all things displayed in this portrait?
- Why do we often feel anxious or worried when confronted with the truth that God is in control of our lives—not us?
- How can a fatalistic view of God's sovereignty keep us from the joy of participating in His mission? If God doesn't *need* us to accomplish His mission, why should we be actively involved in prayer and disciple-making?
- What are some areas in which we need to stop resisting the call for involvement and become a part of God's mission? As a participant in the advancement of God's Kingdom, how can you grow in praying passionately, giving sacrificially, and going confidently? How can your small group encourage each other and work together in these three areas?
- Revelation 5:9-14 clearly illustrates the work of Christ for redemption and the results of the universal worship of Him because of it. How does this worship of the Son clearly reveal the worthiness of God's worship by all people?
- Why should seeing God for who He truly is drive us to dissatisfaction with complacency?
- How does our justification of a lack of personal holiness reveal our lack of knowledge of who God is and His sovereign purpose in our lives?
- How does seeing God in His glory and majesty confront us with our poor substitution of idols as the recipients of our devotion and affection?
- When we are not pursuing the things of this world, we free ourselves to fully pursue God and His will. What steps can we take to practically free ourselves from the idols and strongholds of worldly pursuits?
- Many of the original recipients of this epistle were believers who were experiencing persecution, and this picture of God and of Christ in Revelation 4-5 was intended to encourage suffering believers and to empower them (and us) to live faithfully in the midst of trials. How does faith in a God who has conquered evil, sin, suffering, and death, provide the strength to endure persecution and suffering?
- How can we encourage one another, as well as fellow believers around the world, to continue steadfastly in the faith?

Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. 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 this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/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 study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

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

- *For Our Lives:* Pray for continued guidance as we study Revelation together and for God to grow our knowledge and understanding. Pray we would all ascribe to God the glory He alone is due. Praise Jesus for His worthiness. Pray for the day to come soon when every creature will bow down and worship the Lamb who was slain.

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- *For Our City:* This week we are praying for outreach efforts to the international community in Birmingham in which many of our Brook Hills Faith Family are involved. We are also praying this week for Oak Mountain Presbyterian Church, Bob Flayhart, Pastor.
- *For Our World:* This week we are praying for Brook Hills Member Organization Neverthirst. Neverthirst is dedicated to bringing clean and living water to the poor through the local church. Brook Hills has the privilege of partnering with Neverthirst and the local church to develop water projects in villages in Northern India. This week we are praying specifically for the women who are part of the Adopt-a-Village program where they receive training in health and hygiene, sanitation education, and are exposed to the gospel through the local church. To find out more information about Neverthirst and the adopt-a-village program, visit neverthirstwater.org.