

Small Group Guide

ZEALOUS FOR ONE THING

The Church at Brook Hills
18:22

Dr. David Platt

February 27, 2011

Acts 15:36—

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

ZEALOUS FOR ONE THING

Acts 15:36-18:22

From Acts 15 to Acts 16...

- We are only _____ accepted _____ before God by His grace.
- We are wholly _____ abandoned _____ to God for His glory.

"A zealous man in religion is pre-eminently a man of one thing. It is not enough to say that he is earnest, hearty, uncompromising, wholehearted, fervent in spirit. He only sees one thing, he cares for one thing, he lives for one thing, he is swallowed up in one thing; and that one thing is to please God. Whether he lives, or whether he dies, whether he has health, or whether he has sickness, whether he is rich, or whether he is poor, whether he pleases man, or whether he gives offense, whether he is thought wise, or whether he is thought foolish, whether he gets blame, or whether he gets praise, whether he gets honor, or whether he gets shame, for all this the zealous man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing; and that one thing is to please God, and to advance God's glory. If he is consumed in the very burning, he cares not for it; he is content. He feels that, like a lamp, he is made to burn; and if consumed in burning, he has but done the work for which God appointed him."

J.C. Ryle

Zealous for the Glory of God...

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- We love _____ the people of God.
 - By His grace, God overcomes _____ conflict _____ we create inside the church.
 - For His glory, God ordains _____ persecution _____ we face outside the church.
 - We follow the _____ Spirit _____ of God.
 - We obey His _____ commands _____.
 - He directs our _____ steps _____.
 - We trust the _____ grace _____ of God.
 - Regardless of our status, He gives us _____ salvation _____.
 - An upper-class Asiatic _____ businesswoman _____.
 - A lower-class Greek _____ slave _____.
 - A middle-class Roman _____ jailer _____.
 - Regardless of our circumstances, He gives us a _____ song _____.
 - We proclaim the _____ truth _____ of God.
 - This _____ Word _____ is spoken.
 - This _____ world _____ is changed.
 - In the midst of _____ idolatry _____, we long for God to be praised.
 - He is the _____ Creator _____ of the universe.
 - He is the Sustainer of life.
 - He is the _____ Ruler _____ of the nations.
 - He is the Savior of the needy.
 - He is the _____ Father _____ of each of us.
 - He is the King over all of us.
 - He is the _____ Judge _____ of the world.
 - In the midst of _____ immorality _____, we believe in the power of the gospel.
 - We are not _____ afraid _____.
 - We are not _____ alone _____.
 - We will not be _____ silent _____.
- We will not be _____ stopped _____.

Message Summary

In Acts 16—18, Luke recorded Paul's second missionary journey through Macedonia, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. Though today's passage began with a sharp dispute between Paul and Barnabus over whether or not John Mark should join them in their journey, without question, God's glory and power over our lives and the spread of His gospel is clearly revealed. Paul and his companions demonstrated a zeal for the glory of God by boldly preaching the gospel wherever the Holy Spirit led them, and as they obeyed God, He determined their steps in spreading His message. God showed that His grace is not dependent on our status when He drew a successful businesswoman named Lydia, a slave girl, and a Roman jailer to Himself. Through their time in Thessalonica, God showed that when His Word is spoken, the world is changed—even being referred to as the "men who have turned the world upside down have" (Acts 17:6). Paul's speech before the idolatrous people of Athens at the Areopagus affirmed God's role as Creator, Sustainer, Ruler, Savior, Father, King, and ultimately, the Judge of all. And when their journey led them to Corinth, a multi-cultural, immoral city, Paul and his team showed how the power of the gospel removes our fear, overcomes our loneliness, compels us to speak, and forbids us from being stopped.

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.

- Read the quote by J.C. Ryle from the outline. Discuss your greatest hindrances from focusing on the "one thing" required to be zealous for God?

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- What was motivating Paul and Barnabas to go on a second missionary trip? Were you surprised by the dispute between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:36-41? Why or why not?
- Did God use all men involved in the dispute despite their division? (Yes.) How does this story encourage you to love God's people more?
- Read Acts 16:6-10 and Proverbs 3:5-6. What is the connection between obeying God's Word and being led by the Spirit for specific decisions?
- How does our behavior typically reflect the way we value God's Word? How might our value of God's Word need to change?
- Why is our journey with God more important than reaching a destination we've set or have even felt called to by God?
- Describe a time when you set out for one place only to be redirected by God to something even better.
- As you consider God's work in the lives of Lydia, the slave girl, and the jailer, think about the circumstances God used to bring His salvation in your life. What is significant about the fact that God's grace reaches people of different socio-economic statuses?
- Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned, yet they prayed and sang praises to God. Can you describe a time in your life when God gave you a song to sing despite difficult circumstances? How did the song you sang impact the people around you? How have you been impacted by someone else's song?
- What can we remember as we face difficult situations that can help us persevere?
- How did Paul respond to the idolatry of the Athenians in Acts 17:22-31?
- How do you respond to the idolatry around you? Why do we often develop complacency to idols around us in North America? What values might we need to change in our hearts? What actions might we need to change too?
- Read God's words to Paul in Acts 18:9-11. Why is it significant that God told Paul to stay in Corinth? How have you been encouraged by God's Word simply to stay put for a time? Was that easy or difficult for you? What allows us to stay put in difficult situations?

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:** *Pray that God will make us a church that passionately proclaims His glory and His gospel daily.*
- **Local:** *This week, we are praying for M-Power Ministries, a Christian social services ministry in Avondale that provides opportunities for people to break the cycle of*

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poverty through education, literacy and health services. We are also praying for First Baptist Irondale, Paul Hicks, Pastor.

- **Global:** *This week, we are praying for our partner Bas working among the Arab people group living in Detroit, Michigan. We are also praying for Brook Hills teams in India.*