

## Message Discussion Guide

### THE GLORY OF HIS NAME

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*The Church at Brook Hills . Dr. David Platt . March 9, 2008 . Exodus 34:1-14*

**This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions 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 their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.**

## **Connect . . .**

*Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.*

### **Option 1**

Divide your group into groups of two or three. Best friends and spouses should not be together. Have them identify the one person who they think they know best in life. Ask these questions or create your own similar questions – questions that predict how a person will react in a given situation...

- How they think that person will react if there is a medical emergency at their place of work
- How they think that person will react if their group gets lost in a foreign country
- How they think that person will act at a large party where they don't know anyone
- How that person would act if they had to lead a group to build a fence
- How that person would act if they had to lead a group to solve a problem for a group of people overseas
- Now ask them, how they think their congressional representative would act or react in the same situations.

Ask your group why they feel they can predict how one person will likely act in a given situation, and maybe not be able to predict how another person will act in the same situation.

Point out unless we've seen someone act in a given situation, we make assumptions based on what we've come to know about that person. If we've come to know a person well, we can predict their actions based on what we know about their character. This is especially true if they've been very open to reveal who they really are to us. Many people incorrectly predict how God is going to act or react in given situations because they don't really understand Who He Is. Today, we're going to see who God says He is, so we can better understand how He acts toward us and others, and how He wants us to act as well.

### **Option 2**

Ask your group if they've ever had an incorrect first impression of someone. Ask if one or two people would be vulnerable enough to share their story with your group.

Ask your group why first impressions can sometimes be wrong. (*Answers might include 'Because we only see one action of someone and we don't understand why they took that action, or because we've not really gotten to know that person yet, or our own prejudices might cloud our judgment', etc.*)

Ask your group if anyone had a first impression of God when they were younger that they realized was incorrect as they got older. Have them share some of those incorrect impressions. Ask them how they got a more accurate impression of God.

Point out that we can only know people well if we spend time with them and/or listen to what they tell us about themselves. Many people incorrectly predict how God is going to act or react in given situations because they don't really understand Who He Is. Today, we're going to see who God says He is, so we can better understand how He acts toward us and others, and how He wants us to act as well.

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## **Review the Message . . .**

Remind the group that last week's message drew their attention to the reality of God's unchanging nature concerning His Perfections (Attributes), Promises, and Plans. However, even with His immutable nature, God does change in His relationship to us as we repent of our sin and confess Christ as Lord and King.

**Review the context:** Remind your group that Moses has led the people of God out of slavery in Egypt. The people have seen God's Power and Faithfulness as He delivered them and provided for them on their journey to the Promised Land. They have stopped at Mt. Sinai and Moses has gone up on the mountain to hear from God. The people have seen the manifestation of God's Glory on the mountain and they've seen the mountain shake beneath the power of God's presence! However, just as the people of Egypt had worshiped gods of their own creation, in Moses 40 day absence, the people ask Aaron to create a golden calf that they begin to worship. After Moses pleads for the people in prayer, God does not destroy them but He does judge their idolatry. The Levites kill 3,000 people and many more are killed by a plague. The consequences of idolatry are evident to all. In Exodus 34, Moses has now returned to the mountain to meet with God again and to reaffirm God's covenant with His People. God has just told Moses that His Presence will go with the people into the Promised Land.

Read Exodus 33:17- 23 paying special attention to Moses' prayer in verse 18. Then, discuss these questions:

- What had Moses already seen God do?
- Why do you think he felt that he had not seen all of God's Glory?
- Why do you think he wanted to see more of God's Glory?
- If you were Moses, what would you have been expecting to see?
- Do you think Moses really knew what he was asking? (The very thing he was asking for would result in his destruction.)
- Why did God tell Moses he could only see a glimpse of His Glory?

Read the rest of the story in Exodus 34:5-14 and discuss the questions below;

### **I am the LORD...**

In Exodus 33:18-19 when Moses asks God to show him His glory, God tells Moses that He will proclaim His Name to him. Then, in chapter 34:5-8 we read about God doing exactly that.

- Why do you think God answered Moses' prayer by proclaiming His Name to Him?
  - Why do you think that God began by proclaiming "I AM the LORD", or "I AM who I AM", or "Yahweh, Yahweh" as in Exodus 3:14?
  - What does that tell us about where God's Glory (worth) really is?
  - How does God's Glory in His Name, His Personhood, His Character contrast with the manner in which people ascribe worth to others in our society? (*We give value, worth, glory to people based on their appearance, possessions, or performance.*)
- **To the downcast, I am compassionate (33:19; 34: 6).**
    - David pointed out that this attribute of God is a word of sympathy and concern. He is a God who cares about us.
    - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute to the people of Israel? Review Exodus 2:25, 3:6-7, Psalm 103: 8,13
    - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute in Christ?
    - How has God demonstrated this attributes toward you?
  - **To the undeserving, I am gracious (34:6) .**

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- David pointed out that to give grace means to give what someone does not deserve. It is giving without any merit, totally undeserved, without any obligation. Grace originates wholly in God without any merit on our part that would deserve it.
- How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute to the people of Israel?
- How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute in Christ?
- How has God demonstrated this attribute toward you?
  
- **With the defiant, I am patient (34:6) .**
  - God says He is “slow to anger”
  - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute to the people of Israel?
  - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute in Christ? (II Peter 3:9)
  - How has God demonstrated this attribute toward you?
  
- **With the undesirable, I am loving (34:6,7) .**
  - David pointed out that this word for love describes God’s commitment to His people and is loosely associated with “loving-kindness” in the English language. It’s a picture of a kind and steadfast love that is poured out on His people.
  - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute to the people of Israel?
  - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute in Christ?
  - How has God demonstrated this attribute toward you?
  
- **For the doubtful, I am faithful (34:6) .**
  - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute to the people of Israel?
  - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute in Christ?
  - How has God demonstrated this attributes toward you?
  
- **For the disobedient, I am forgiving (34:7) .**
  - David pointed out this word in Hebrew means “to lift or carry” for someone. It’s a picture of what God has done for our sin, rebellion, and wickedness. He is willingness to lift the guilt and condemnation from us and forgive us of all of it.
  - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute to the people of Israel?
  - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute in Christ?
  - How has God demonstrated this attribute toward you?
  
- **Regarding the demands of the law, I am just (34:7) .**
  - God says that He does not leave the guilty unpunished. His Holiness and justice will not allow it.
  - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute to the people of Israel?
  - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute in Christ?
  - How has God demonstrated this attribute toward you?
  
- **Regarding the devotion of your heart, I am jealous (34:10-14) .**
  - David pointed out that the word “jealous” is descriptive of God in the context of a covenant relationship, much like marriage. It is a holy jealousy. He longs for His Bride’s love because only He is worthy of that devotion and it is only when we love Him that we can truly be satisfied.
  - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute to the people of Israel?
  - How have we seen God demonstrate this attribute in Christ?
  - How should we live in light of this truth in our world?

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- **To all who desire to see My glory, I am Jesus.**
  - David pointed out that the fullness of God's Glory, as was anticipated by the prophets, was fully revealed in Christ Jesus. Read John 1:14-18 to show this reality. Other verses: II Corinthians 4:6 and Hebrews 1:3

### ***Application . . .***

- What was Moses' first reaction when he was shown more of God's glory?
- How should a fuller understanding of who God Is today lead us to react?
- As Christ-followers who bear His Name, how should we likewise demonstrate these same attributes, with the help of His Spirit, to those in our family? To our co-workers? To our neighbors? To those who don't know Christ in Birmingham? To the rest of the lost world?