

Message Discussion Guide

UNVEILING HIS GLORY

The Church at Brook Hills . Dr. David Platt . March 16, 2008 Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

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 in half. Direct each group to choose a spokesperson who will summarize his or her group's discussion. Instruct the first group to share with each other what they thought being a Christian meant at the time that they became a Christian. Instruct the second group to share how their view of being a Christian has changed, if at all, since becoming a follower of Christ.

After each group has had a few minutes of discussion time, invite the spokesperson from each group to summarize his or her group's answers. Note any similarities or differences between the first and second group's summary.

Explain that today's discussion covers an idea that is in stark contrast to what many people have been taught in the church about what it means to be a Christian.

Option 2

Explain to your group that David made the observation that today's church has created a culture where attendees think that their purpose in life is to please God. Ask your group the following questions about his statement:

- Do you think that people in the church are even trying to please God?
- If so, how are church attendees trying to please God?
- Do you think that trying to please God is a bad thing? Why or why not?
- How can trying to please God by relying on our performance in obeying rules and regulations keep us from doing what God truly designed us to do?

Review the Message . . .

The Spirit and the Glory of God

Remind the group that at the beginning of this year, God led David in a different direction with his messages than he had planned. God led him to focus on God's Spirit and God's Glory. This first mini-outline is a recap of that first sermon on the second Sunday of 2008. The main point in this sermon outline is the last point - that we need to be a people desperate for the Spirit of God.

- **Only the Spirit of God knows the fullness of the glory of God.**
- **If we want to know God, then we need the Spirit to reveal Him to us.**
- **Therefore, a people who are desperate to know God will be desperate for His Spirit**
 - **If we are not desperate for His Spirit, it is a sure indicator that we have grown content with knowing little about God.**
- **Do we want to know the glory of God?**
 - **Then let us be a people desperate for the Spirit of God.**

Message Discussion Guide

UNVEILING HIS GLORY

The Church at Brook Hills . Dr. David Platt . March 16, 2008 Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Discussion Questions

Read 1 Cor. 2:11. Based on this passage, answer the following questions:

- How do we know God? Can we know God apart from His Spirit?
- If the Spirit is the way that everyone knows God, how can we spread His Glory to the nations without being desperate for and dependent upon Him?

Application . . .

- Why are we not concerned about the absence of the Holy Spirit in our church/lives?
- What does it say about our desire to glorify God if we do not care about, or are not desperate for, the Spirit's presence in our church/lives?

Do we really need His Spirit?

- **Spiritless Christianity . . .**
 - Relies on **external** regulations.
 - Revolves around **our** performance for God.
 - Results in condemnation and **death**.
- **Spirit-filled Christianity . . .**
 - Relies on **internal** transformation.
 - Revolves around **God's** performance in us.
 - Results in salvation and **life**.

Discussion Questions

- Enlist a volunteer to read Exodus 34: 29-35. Remind your group that this event occurred after Moses had received the Law and returned to see the Israelites worshipping the golden calf that Aaron had made. Moses threw the Ten Commandments to the ground shattering them and God judged the people for worshipping idols. Three thousand people were killed. Moses prayed to God for mercy not to destroy all the people and God extended mercy to them. Moses then returned to the mountain to meet with God for 40 more days and nights and God revealed part of His Glory to Moses. The affect was Moses face mysteriously and brilliantly shined.
- Ask for another volunteer to read the New Testament interpretation of this event in 2 Cor. 3:7-17. Encourage the group to listen for the difference between the Law and the Spirit based on this passage. Emphasize the differences pointed out by David in the outline above.
- If the Law brought death to God's people, why would He hold them to that standard?
- What is the difference between what the Law did for God's people and how the Spirit works in God's people?
- Read Ezekiel 36:26-28. How does the idea of God transforming a heart of stone to a heart of flesh give a picture of how the Spirit works in our hearts under the New Covenant?
- Verse 17 states that the Spirit brings us freedom. David stated that this freedom allows us to do anything that we want, but with the Spirit's transformation of our hearts, we will want what God wants. If so, why do we still sin?

Application . . .

- The Old Covenant was a set of rules and regulations. How do we in the New Covenant of Christ still sometimes live as if we are still under sets of rules and regulations? Are some rules and regulations helpful? How can they also be harmful?
- What is the false pretense behind wanting to be a "good" Christian?
- If God is not interested in our performance for Him, what is the purpose of participating in things like church worship gatherings, small group meetings, Bible reading, or prayer?
- What happens when we try over and over again out of our own power to live "for Christ"? Is it freeing to think that Christ is the only one responsible for changing your life?

Message Discussion Guide

UNVEILING HIS GLORY

The Church at Brook Hills . Dr. David Platt . March 16, 2008 Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

- If Christianity is not about our performance but God's work in our lives, how important is the Spirit's role? What will His work in our lives mean about the way we live?
- What difference should the Spirit make in our lives?
- How can we let the Spirit take over our lives?

Do we really want His glory?

- We will become like what we behold.
- We will preach that which we prize.

Discussion Questions

- Enlist someone to read 2 Cor. 3:18. Encourage the group to imagine they are holding a mirror in front of their face. Invite them to tell you what they see. Emphasize that the picture in the mirror is purely a reflection of themselves. How are Christ's followers mirrors of God's Glory?
- What is the significance of having "unveiled faces"?
- Read 2 Cor. 4:5-6. David stated that something is only able to reflect that to which it has been exposed. According to Verse 5, how do Christ's followers become exposed to His Glory?
- Based on 2 Cor. 3:18, can His followers accurately reflect His Glory without the Spirit?
- Paul states in 2 Cor. 3:18 that Christ's followers are transformed through the Spirit to become more like Christ. What is the significance of this transformation to the spread of the gospel?
- If believers take the Glory of Christ with them wherever they go, how does this redefine their thoughts of church? evangelism? relationships? our purpose?
- How does Paul's emphasis on preaching "Jesus Christ as Lord," illustrate what is most important in his life?

Application . . .

- Can we mirror God's Glory without having seen or known His Glory?
- How do we know His Glory?
- If we are continually beholding God's Glory through the Spirit, can we help becoming more like Jesus?
- If we are supposed to allow the Spirit to transform us apart from our performance, is there any benefit to the spiritual disciplines?
- What percentage of our conversations each week with our co-workers, friends, or family are about Christ? If we preach (proclaim) that which we prize, what will people think is most important to us?
- Where should we reflect God's Glory? Where is it most important for His Glory to be seen?
- How many times do we rely on church leaders or someone else to reflect the Glory of God to the nations? Birmingham? our workplaces? our families?
- On a scale of one to ten, how well do you think you unveiled/demonstrated/reflected the Glory of Christ last week? What can you do to better reflect the Glory of Christ next week? (*Nothing, in the flesh!!! Ask the Spirit for a heart transformation!*).
- How can we hold ourselves accountable to living in the Spirit so that we'll reflect His Glory, and not live in the flesh?