

Small Group Discussion Guide for 01.18.2009
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Acts 2:40-47

Leaders Notes

This week we are looking at Acts 2:42-47 where we get a glimpse of how the lives of the early Christians were radically changed by the message of the gospel. Earlier in the chapter, Peter preached the gospel at the festival of Pentecost in Jerusalem where over three thousand people became followers of Christ. The text we are looking at today is a picture of how those believers came together as a gospel-centered community. At the Summit Church this passage is essential to our D.N.A. because we want to put the transforming power of the gospel on display in our relationships. Also for this week we are continuing to make our way through *The Treasure Principle* and the discussion questions for chapters three and four are at the bottom of this discussion guide. Books are still available for free at the info table.

Discussion Questions

1. In verse 42, Luke mentions four specific practices of the early Christians. Teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayers. Are these four practices present at the Summit Church? If so, how?
2. Verse 44 says that “all who believed were together and had all things in common.” Certainly these early Christians came from different neighborhoods, different nations, different workplaces, and different backgrounds. How does the gospel influence the way we see diversity? What does this look like in an area such as RDU?
3. Verse 47 claims that the early Christians had “favor with all the people.” What was unique about the church in contrast to the surrounding culture that gave it this sort of standing with outsiders?

Discussion Questions – *The Treasure Principle* Chapters 3-4

1. In Matthew 6:21 Jesus tells us, “Where your treasure is there your heart will be also.” In other words our hearts are bound to whatever gives us the most joy. If we live for financial security, then our affections are on money and not on God. What does this mean for the way we view God and its impact on our giving?
2. What are some of the reasons that keep Christians from giving? What does Alcorn say is the biggest reason?
3. (Personal) Alcorn compares our short lives on earth to a dot and our eternal lives in heaven as a neverending line that extends from that dot. If God were to audit my finances, would He conclude that I live more for the “dot” or more for the “line”? What would some of His observations be?

Prayer Points

1. Pray and ask God that your group would be faithful to living out biblical community as it is described here in Acts 2. Pray you really grow and are challenged in each of the four practices that are described in Acts 2:42.
2. This is a group of Christians that “the Lord added to their number day by day.” They practiced genuine gospel-motivated community in front of a watching world and that world was greatly impacted by it (verse 47). Pray your group would never be “naval-gazers” but instead a group with a missional mindset. Pray for God to show your group members avenues to invite and bring others to the group or to the church. Pray for boldness and consistency to this gospel-motivated mindset.
3. Lastly, look at the relationships they had there. Friendships. Pray God would break down barriers to true friendships and that He would consistently use each of you to encourage / support / challenge one another in your belief in the gospel.

Discussion Guide Answers

1. All four of these should be present at the Summit in different ways. We all sit under the teaching of the word on Sunday mornings. Fellowship really just occurs wherever two or more Christians are gathered together and so this can occur all over the place. Small groups is one way this fellowship is practiced and deepened. The breaking of bread in this verse probably refers to both the Lord’s Supper (communion) and eating meals together. Prayer at the Summit Church is an emphasis of our Sunday morning worship time and happens in our small groups as well.
2. The gospel influences the way we see diversity because once we acknowledge that our meaning and significance comes from God then our distinctions become a reflection of God’s glory and not a means for exerting supremacy over one another. Once we know the depth of our sin and God’s grace in redeeming us, then we couldn’t use any distinctions to feel better about ourselves. The gospel alone offers us the fulfillment and sense of belonging that allows diversity to be celebrated.
3. The early Christians were loving, unselfish, and radically generous and this made the outsiders take notice. “The beautification of the church” occurs when the gospel is demonstrated in our relationships to each other and to the surrounding community. Non-believers can’t help but be intrigued by this type of fellowship because it is so different from the rest of the world.

The Treasure Principle Answers

1. If our hearts are bound to whatever brings us the most joy then we must delight most fully in God, viewing him as our treasure surpassing everything else. Desiring God and being satisfied in him is then integral to the way we view giving. Money no longer is our treasure and our hearts are not tied to our bank accounts. Therefore we are able to give joyfully as an act of worship before God.
2. Alcorn mentions several reasons that Christians do not give. Fear, insecurity, not believing God will take care of our needs. This is a personal question and there could be as many answers as there are people. The biggest reason Alcorn says that Christians don’t give is because they do not understand the temporality of their lives on earth and that their citizenship is in heaven.
3. This is just a question that could be read aloud and then you could ask your group members to meditate on it over the next week.