

GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Fall 2023 – Acts Sermon Series - “Witness”

Week of Oct. 8 (Week 5)

ICE BREAKER: This time is designed for getting conversation going. [Click here](#) for a helpful list of ideas for this time or create / do your own!

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Our Young Adult gathering for 20s & 30s called “The Turnout” will be meeting this Friday, October 13. For more information including the address, contact our young adult leaders at young_adults@churchatbergen.org.
2. We are currently accepting donations of new adult socks to benefit those in need through St. Joseph’s Hospital. We will be labeling each pair of socks with our church information so we can also share the love of Christ! You can drop off your new packs of socks in the box located in the church lobby by Sunday, November 5.
3. Join us for prayer every Tuesday night from 7-8 PM. All are welcome!
4. Every Wednesday morning at 6:30 AM a group of women meet for prayer at the church! Reach out to covenant members Danielle Hoitsma (leavnalegacy@aol.com) and Al Cimino (alexandra.m.cimino@gmail.com) for more information.
5. Join us for prayer every Sunday morning from 9-9:30 AM. We meet in the classroom behind the Guest Services desk. All are welcome!

PRAYER FOR DISCUSSION: Leader or Co-Leader prays for the discussion time. Pray that the The Holy Spirit would assist in the conversing, processing, and listening of the discussion.

SERMON DISCUSSION TIME: You can start the discussion by saying: This past Sunday we looked at Acts You 17:1-15 where we saw two opposing responses, to when the mind is engaged with the gospel: a close-minded response and an open-minded response. We also saw the fruit of these two responses or to put it another way: how these two responses express themselves. And lastly, we saw how the Holy Spirit humbles our minds and makes us receptive to God’s word.

QUESTION #1: In the sermon a point was made that God’s word *can*, *AND should*, be rationally engaged with by our minds. Have you ever thought about this idea before? Is this something new to you? Why is this important?

QUESTION #2: It was said in the sermon that the rotten-fruit of a closed-mind is becoming so afraid to lose control that it becomes more about winning than finding the truth. Discussion therefore, is no longer a path to truth, but an opportunity to win and when you see yourself losing the grip on the competition, you abandon rationality and you’ll do anything to squash the opponent and win. Have you ever been on the giving and/or receiving end of something like this? What was that experience like? Why is it so dangerous to do this with God’s word?



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QUESTION #3: Towards the end of the sermon we heard three practical ways to practice open-mindedness towards God’s word: Time, Temperature, & Trust. (#1) Time: Slow down your time in God’s word, (#2) Temperature: Come hot to God’s word, come with eager expectation, (#3) Trust: Trust that the Holy Spirit will help you see as you study God’s word. Of these three, which stood out the most to you or impacted you the most and why?

QUESTION #4: At the end of the sermon we heard an important point about reason and open-mindedness: Reason and being open-minded can only take us so far. These alone can not save us. Rationale, reasoning, humility, open-mindedness: these things alone can not make us see the divine truth. Why is this such an important point of emphasis and so important to remember?

QUESTION #5: The sermon closed by pointing out that the written word can only condemn us. This is why Jesus says that the written word all points to him. The written word is meant to point us to the-living-word-made-flesh who was crucified for us. God gave us his word in the flesh and our prideful, close-mindedness refused to submit to him and instead we crucified him. The word made flesh, Jesus Christ, is the only one that has the power to truly break the stubbornness of our minds and truly submit to the truth. What stubbornness do you hold or have in your mind that you need the power of Jesus to break today?

PRAY TOGETHER: Spend time taking *and recording* prayer requests and then pray together as a group. *(You may want to consider sending out the prayer requests weekly to your group to keep everyone informed and in the loop on how to pray for one another throughout the week. This also makes it easier to check-in with people who have shared requests to see how the Lord has been working in their lives.)*



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