

## GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Fall 2022 – Acts Sermon Series - “Witness”

Week 5 – Oct 10 - Oct 16

**EMPHASIS FOR THE MONTH: VULNERABILITY.** Now that you have begun to build relationships within your group, for the month of October our emphasis will be on trying to grow as a group (slowly is fine!) in openness and vulnerability. This may take some initiation on your part as the leader and/or co-leader to model how to be open and vulnerable and how intense the openness and vulnerability is / should be. Please know that I will be praying for you and your groups as you venture into this. May God guide you and give you wisdom and discernment.

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Please announce the following to your group:

1. Hearing and listening to a song multiple times is a great way to learn that song in order to be able to sing it well. The better we know the songs we sing as the gathered people of God, the more robust our corporate worship will be (Ephesians 5:19). In an effort to make it as easy as possible for us to learn, know, and sing our corporate worship songs, please visit [churchatbergen.org](http://churchatbergen.org) and under the resources tab click the page titled: “Corporate Worship” to access playlists of our corporate worship songs wherever and whenever you want to. We pray that this resource is helpful and encouraging to you. Looking forward to hearing us worship our God, united as one in song!
2. All young adults (20's & 30's) are invited to join us for the Turnout, this Friday, October 14 at 7 PM. Our time together will include fellowship & food, worship & prayer, and the teaching & meditation of God's word. Email our Young Adult Leaders at [young\\_adults@churchatbergen.org](mailto:young_adults@churchatbergen.org) if you have any questions!
3. Our next Baptism Class is scheduled for this Sunday, October 16 at 12 PM. If you would like to attend the class, please email [jackie.levesque@churchatbergen.org](mailto:jackie.levesque@churchatbergen.org)
4. We are doing a volunteer outreach with Servant's Heart Ministry on Saturday, October 22, from 8:30AM - 5:00PM. We will have details of location and exact scope of the work as we get closer. No construction experience is necessary. Coffee and lunch provided. Sign up in the weekly newsletter or email [info@churchatbergen.org](mailto:info@churchatbergen.org) to attend!
5. Join us for prayer, every Sunday morning from 9-9:30 AM, before our 10 AM worship service. 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.

**READING OF GOD’S WORD:** Have the leader, co-leader or a volunteer read Acts 2:42-47.

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**DISCUSSION TIME:** You can start the discussion by saying: This past Sunday Pastor McKinney preached from Acts 2:42-47 and focused on answering one question: What are the marks of genuine conversion to Jesus Christ? We saw three marks that Pastor McKinney pointed out and expanded on: (1) You take God seriously, (2) You treat your money and possessions as they belong to God, and (3) Your faith cannot coexist with individualism.

**QUESTION #1:** What stood out to you the most from this past Sunday’s sermon?

You can transition by saying: The first mark of genuine conversion to Jesus Christ seen in this passage from Acts is that God is taken seriously. We see this in Acts 2:42 where it says, “and awe came upon every soul.” The word “awe” in this verse comes from the Greek “phobos” which means, “fear”.

**OPTIONAL:** Read Jeremiah 32:38-41. What stands out to you in this verse? *(this question can be used as an optional question used at your discretion. If you have time go for it, but if you feel like you will run out of time, feel free to go to the next question - **ESPECIALLY IF YOU FEEL LIKE IT WILL TAKE TIME AWAY FROM PRAYING TOGETHER!**)*

**QUESTION #2:** Jeremiah 32:38-41 speaks of the new covenant, referring to The Church in the New Testament. How does having awe (fear) help us in taking God seriously both individually AND as a church community and family?

**SELF-REFLECTION RHETORICAL QUESTION:** Do you take God seriously with awe and fear? Would other people say that you take God seriously? *(This is intended for self-reflection for group members and is optional depending on time and what you are sensing as you are leading your group in discussion. IF AND ONLY IF your group is very open, honest and transparent with one another, this question could be asked to one another and answered openly and may be insightful for how to pray for anyone who shares their struggles with this. WE ALL struggle with this.)*

**PRAYER:** Spend time praying for one another and for our church, that the Holy Spirit would open our eyes, minds, and hearts to the fear and awe of God by continually drawing our gaze to the cross of Christ where the infinite price of our debt was paid for us. Pray that we would be individuals and a community marked by taking God seriously with fear and awe.

You can then transition by saying: The second mark of genuine conversion to Jesus Christ seen in this passage from Acts is that money & possessions are treated as though they belong to God. We see this in Acts 2:44-45 where it says, “And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.” When you are genuinely converted, you realize that EVERYTHING you have ever been given was never truly yours to begin with, it is God’s, given to you as a free gift. This realization frees us to give away the things that were never truly ours.

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**OPTIONAL:** Why is the topic of money and possessions a difficult and/or uncomfortable one to talk about? *(this question can be used as an optional question used at your discretion. If you have time go for it, but if you feel like you will run out of time, feel free to go to the next question - **ESPECIALLY IF YOU FEEL LIKE IT WILL TAKE TIME AWAY FROM PRAYING TOGETHER!**)*

**QUESTION #3:** What gets in the way and prevents us from being generous, treating our money, possessions and even our time as it belongs to God?

**QUESTION #4:** Pastor McKinney described a spectrum that we all fall on in that there are those that are in need, those that can meet needs, and those that fall in between. Why is humility important for ALL on this spectrum, both for the one in need and for the one able to meet needs?

**QUESTION #5:** How does the death of Christ on the cross, paying for ALL our debt and crediting us righteousness, inform our view on, and the role of, money and possessions in our lives?

**PRAYER:** Spend time praying for one another and for our church community that we would be individuals and a community marked by treating our money and possessions as they belong to God. Pray that the Holy Spirit would help enable us to kill our pride and plead for humility and help in this area.

You can then transition by saying: The third and final mark of genuine conversion to Jesus Christ seen in this passage from Acts is that your faith no longer coexists with individualism. Pastor McKinney described a “relentless-togetherness” of the community in Acts seen in Acts 2:46-47 where it says, “And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes”. Something about this community’s new found faith drew them to other Christians. Faith does not isolate itself.

**QUESTION #6:** Is going to a church regularly and being involved in a church community actually necessary for the genuine converted believer in Christ? Why or why not?

**QUESTION #7:** Pastor McKinney emphasized individualism as self-seeking, defining it as follows: What matters most in life is doing what makes you happy and fulfills your desires, dreams, and plans, and you should eliminate any commitment or obligation that gets in the way. What are some practical ways that we can combat individualism and our self-seeking nature?

**PRAYER:** Spend time praying for one another and for our church community that we would be a people marked by self-denial and relentless pursuit of the cross of Jesus Christ. That through the power of the Holy Spirit we would pick up our cross daily and follow Jesus and be active and involved members of our church family and community.

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You can then transition by saying: One of the ways that God chooses to use apologetics is through a community that embodies and lives out the gospel. When this happens it creates a sense of positive social pressure for people to consider the gospel. We see this in Acts 2:47, “having favor with all the people.” When the gospel lives in a church it makes people stop and think and consider Jesus. One of the most enticing things about the gospel is how it changes individuals and communities from self-centered, comfort-seekers into self-sacrificing, cross-bearers. When someone witnesses that, they stop and consider Jesus.

**QUESTION #8:** What would it actually look like for us at Church at Bergen to be a community that had been changed from self-centered, comfort-seekers to self-sacrificing, cross-bearers?

**PRAYER:** Spend time praying for one another and for our church community that we would become individuals and a community marked by true and genuine conversion to Jesus Christ. That through the power of the Holy Spirit we would be changed from self-centered, comfort-seekers to self-sacrificing, cross-bearers.

**FINAL QUESTION & PRAYER TIME:** How can we pray for one another? Spend significant time taking prayer requests and praying for one another. This is absolutely the best use of our time together.

**IDEA:** Record all the prayer requests shared so that they can be sent out in a follow up email the following day so we can be praying for one another throughout the week.

