



Groups

Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!

If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions towards the end of the document.

- ☐ These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders.
- ☐ Use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group.

NEW THIS YEAR:

As we enter this new season at Grace Chapel in search for the next Senior Pastor, we invite you to consider the significance of this moment and to incorporate a time of prayer for the search.

Outline

- I. Introduction and Main Scripture Readings
- II. Group Discussion Questions
- III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search
- IV. The Journey Resources
- V. Support for the Leader

How to Use These Study Guides:

1. **Before the meeting:** Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
2. **Check In:** Begin each meeting with a short time checking in with one another.
3. **Read Scripture:** You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
4. **Ask Questions:** Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with and see how the conversation flows.
5. **End with Prayer:** Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

If your group meets over Zoom:

- ☐ Expect to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
- ☐ Be sensitive to attention spans over zoom. Keep meetings shorter than they would be in person.

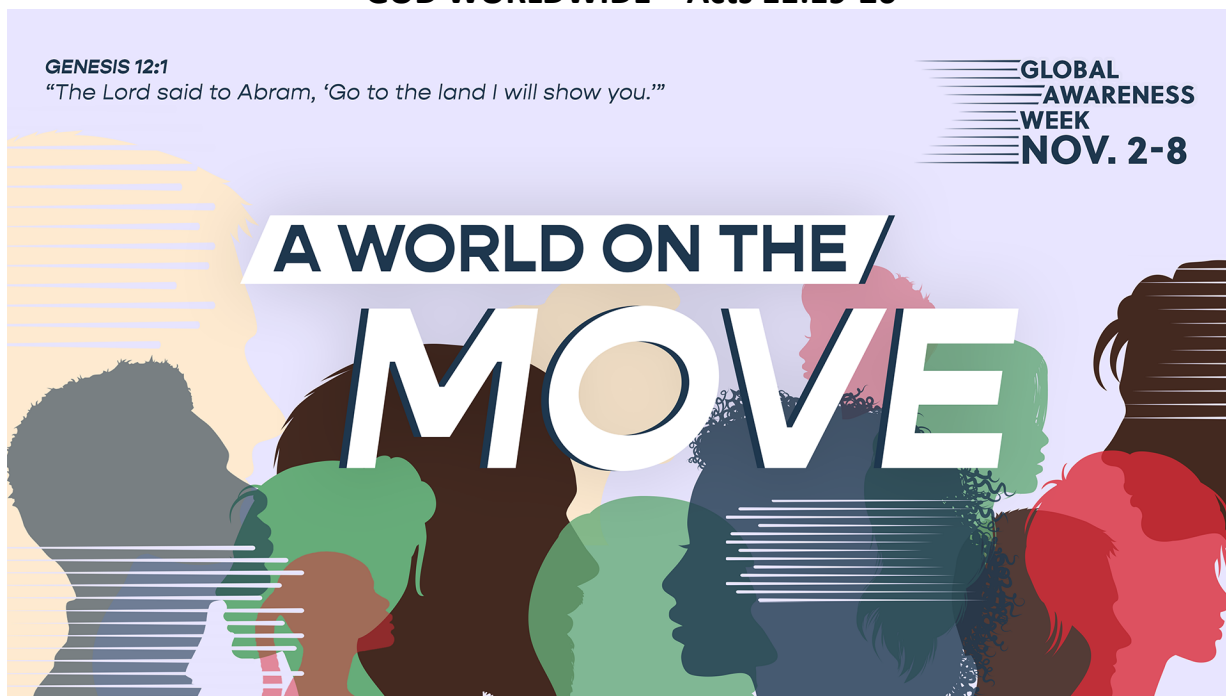
Group Leader Support:

- ☐ Please reach out to your Campus Pastor if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic.
- ☐ If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor [Tim Ghali](#) or [Grace Lee](#) from the Group Life team.

LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for the Global Awareness Week Sermon given on November 4, 2023
by Dr. Sam George

THE FIRST CHRISTIANS: SCATTERINGS AND GATHERINGS OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD WORLDWIDE – Acts 11:19-26



I. Introduction

Welcome to Global Awareness Week 2023, our annual opportunity to learn more about God’s kingdom building work globally and locally! Our theme is **“A World on the Move.”** In Genesis 12:1, “The Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you.’” In the Scriptures and in human history, people are on the move. Human migration, diaspora has become a major, global megatrend. This is reshaping societies, economies, nations and even churches. Amid this human migration, God is on the move. People in transition provide a strategic opportunity for us to love and serve our newly arrived neighbors as Jesus’ hands and feet. God is going places. Let’s take the gospel with us and go!

Our keynote speaker is Dr. Sam George, director of the Global Diaspora Institute at Wheaton College and the Lausanne Catalyst for Diasporas. Born in India to Christian parents, Sam had a life-changing personal encounter with Jesus at the age of 15. He speaks 5 languages and has lived in 5 different countries and travels widely around the world.

Question: What can I do to become engaged in the work that God is doing globally?

Bottom Line: We must be global Christians with a global vision because our God is a global God.

Let's begin in prayer before we begin reading and discussing our text.

Main Scripture Readings: Acts 11:19-26

¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. ²⁰ Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹ The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

²² News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴ He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

²⁵ Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

II. Group Discussion Questions:

1. Last week we concluded our sermon series on *Beginnings*, where we reviewed the story of Abraham. Genesis 22:17-18 says:

¹⁷ I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, ¹⁸ and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”

Matthew 28:16-20 recounts what Jesus commanded his disciples before he was taken up into heaven.

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

- As we celebrate Global Awareness Week, what is God highlighting to you through these two passages? What do you notice about God’s heart for the nations? What does it mean to be an offspring of Abraham and to fulfill the Great Commission?
2. Dr. Sam George began his message stating that many of the stories in the Bible are about displacement. Furthermore, he said that we should read the Bible “geographically.”
 - How does reading the Biblical narratives through the lens of displacement and geography provide fresh insights or perspectives?
 - Feel free to share an example where understanding the geographic and historical context of a passage or a story provided richer understanding of God’s revelation.
 3. The church of Antioch is the place where people were first called Christians. Using the church in Antioch as an example, we start to see the dynamic movement of Christians in a repeating cycle of scattering (**diaspora**) and gathering (**ecclesia**).
 - How do we see this happening now (in the world; in America; in your neighborhood)?
 - Which of these two words most resonate with you?
 - **Diaspora** – the “scattered or dispersed”
 - **Ecclesia** – the “gathering”

4. Barnabas (son of encouragement) played a key role in bringing Paul to the Antioch church to provide a strong foundation of biblical teaching. Barnabas recognized the need of the Antioch church and acted accordingly.

Most of us are not able to physically be on mission in another country but we can be like Barnabas. Brainstorm with your group about the various ways you can become involved in God's global movement.

Take Home Message:

Wherever you are and wherever you go, you are an ambassador of Christ. Find some time this week to join GAW Partner Lunches that are scheduled at each of our campuses. You will hear how our visiting partners are doing God's work all over the world, and how you can support their ministries.

Let's Pray

III. Prayer for Senior Pastor Search

During this next ministry year as we navigate transitions, we invite you to secure time during your life group to pray over the search process. Click [here](#) to access the full resource of the prayer guide.

Prayers for Preparation of the heart

- ☐ Pray for God to reveal to you the condition of your soul or the work of God's Spirit within you, as you consider your feelings about the Senior Pastor search process.
- ☐ Prayer is not just an opportunity to make requests from God, but to listen to what God might want for us during this season of transition. Pause and listen for any invitation from God that he is asking you to enter into.

Prayers for the Purposes of God

- ☐ Pray that God will use the people of Grace Chapel in the fulfilling of his mission to further the Gospel message and for us to be people of peace and healing in a broken world.

Prayers for the People of Grace

- ☐ Pray that Grace Chapel will seek the Lord as we continue our vision to be a vibrant, growing, multicultural community of seekers and believers, discovering life with God for the good of the world. Pray that we will continue with our mission to make and mobilize more disciples for Jesus Christ in Greater Boston and beyond.

Prayers for the Person God's calling

- ☐ Pray that they will have a passion to continue the work the Lord is doing at Grace Chapel and that they will be excited about the opportunities here.
- ☐ Pray that the new pastor will have a clear vision for how to minister to the people of Grace Chapel and the surrounding community.

Prayers for Discernment

- ☐ Pray for God's clear direction in how resumes are examined and interviews conducted.
- ☐ Ask God to bring the right person to the attention of the committee.
- ☐ Pray for the Search Committee to have God's wisdom in all the questions and information they share with the prospective pastor.

IV. The Journey



We're all on a journey. Where is yours taking you?

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it is good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus. It comes from putting them into practice.

Three kinds of practice, actually:

- ☐ The **with-God life** of our personal habits and routines;
- ☐ The **with-others life** of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- ☐ The **for-the-world life** that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

Launching by the end of September: The newly, revised Discipleship Planning Tool

We invite your group to [take the assessment](#) and to spend a session to share about the practice and perspective you chose to focus on for the next three months.

V. **Support for the Leader**

These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and opportunities in the life of our church.

Teaching Points:

- ☐ The Diaspora Jews converged in Jerusalem for Pentecost and heard Peter speak
- ☐ Jerusalem was the first center of Christianity
- ☐ Followers of Jesus are first called “Christians” in Antioch
- ☐ The message spreads from Antioch to the world
- ☐ Diaspora – scattering
- ☐ Ekklesia – Gathering or assembly

- ☐ Be a welcoming congregation, especially those in the margins of society
- ☐ Embrace diversity and grow in intercultural skills and understandings
- ☐ Be committed to the truth and learn continually from best teachers
- ☐ Be generous to others, especially those who have come under tough times
- ☐ Sent their very best (Paul) for frontier mission projects
- ☐ Celebrate unity with new name and new sense of belonging
- ☐ Leaders provide encouragement and fill gaps in ministry with other leaders