

life groups' sermon guide

switch: others first: transformation



Life Groups exist at Kingsway to provide authentic relationships for spiritual growth, caring for one another, and reaching out to others.

Introduction

In the 1970's, Chuck Colson was the chief attorney in President Richard Nixon's administration. He occupied the office next to the Oval Office. He was known as a ruthless, "hatchet man" who knew how to get things done regardless of who was hurt in the process. After the Watergate hotel break and subsequent cover-up, Colson went to prison where he gave his life to Christ. After his release from prison, he began a prison ministry that continues today. He written extensively on the Christian faith and is a leading voice for Christ and His kingdom in the world.

In the first century, Saul was appointed by the Jews to round up Christians and bring them back bound to Jerusalem for persecution. He literally was "breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1). After an encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, Saul was transformed into the apostle Paul, one of the greatest evangelists in history.

1. What changes occurred in your life after becoming a follower of Christ?
2. Have you ever known anyone who had a dramatic conversion and life change after becoming a Christian? What was their story?

Bible Study and Application

Read Acts 1:1-11

- What power causes the switch in our lives to put others first? (vs 2, 5, 8)
- How do we gain access to this power?
- What are we to do with this power? (vs 8)
- What are the characteristics of this power? (Gal 5:22-23)
 - How many of these involve putting others first?
 - What are we to put to death in order to put others first? (Gal 5:24-26)

We are called to be witnesses. (vs 8)

- What is it that witnesses do?
- What are we, as Christians, to do?

- The word for “witness” here is the same that is used for “martyr” elsewhere in the Bible. What does this tell us about our determination to testify of Christ to a lost world?

The Samaritans were hated by the Jews. They were ethnic “half breeds” that Jews went out of their way to avoid. Many of the early Christians (at the time the Book of Acts was written) were Jews. Yet Christians were commanded by Jesus to go to the Samaritans with the good news. (vs 8)

- Who would be modern-day “Samaritans”?
- How can you begin to reach out to these individuals?

These verses also tell us what NOT to do. (vs 6-7)

- What side-issue do the disciples ask Jesus about?
- How do these verses (and verses 10-11) show a lack of proper focus among the disciples?
- What issues distract Christians today from the commandment to witness to those who do not know Christ?
- How did Jesus handle this issue?
- In what ways can the failure to put others first lead to distractions, arguments and inaction by the body of Christ?
- How should we handle such distractions? Give a specific example.

Read Matt 4:23 and Acts 1:1-3

Jesus announced a “gospel of the Kingdom” (Matt 4:23) and declared “the kingdom of God is at hand.” (Mark 1:15). A kingdom is a place--with borders, subjects and a king (someone in supreme authority.)

- Given these aspects of a kingdom, why would the gospel not always be received as good news?
- What are some of the results when man ignores God’s authority?
- Does following Christ bring good news for today to a lost and hurting world, or is it just a message for hope after death? In what ways?
- How can putting others first help further the kingdom of God?
- How can putting others first lead to an increased receptivity to the gospel message?
- What specific action will you take as an individual—or a Life Group—to bring hope to someone in your sphere of influence? Pray for the strength and wisdom provided by the Holy Spirit.

