

Community With a Purpose

A Weekly Bible Study for Small Groups

By Douglas Storms

Table of Contents

About this Bible Study

Community with a Purpose

Lesson 1	Community	Acts 2:42-47
Lesson 2	Purpose	Matt. 22:34-40; 28:16-20
Lesson 3	Commitment	Ex. 19:1-6; Matt. 26:26-29; 5:33-37
Week 4/5	Group Activity	

Love

Lesson 4	He First Loved Us	1 John 4:7-21; John 15: 9-17
Lesson 5	What Kind of Love?	1 Cor. 13; Rom. 12:9-21
Lesson 6	Ministry and Mission	Matt. 25:31-46; Luke 10:25-31
Week 4/5	Group Activity	

Gathering for Worship

Lesson 7	Encouragement	1 Thess. 5:11-24
Lesson 8	Living by the Spirit	Gal. 5:16-26, Rom. 12:1-2
Lesson 9	Rejoicing in the Lord	Phil. 4:4-9
Week 4/5	Group Activity	

The Resurrection of Christ

Lesson 10	Hope	Jer. 29:11; John 3:1-21
Lesson 11	Faith	Heb. 11:1; Psalm 27:13-14; Matt. 6:25-34
Lesson 12	Power	Isa. 40:27-31; Rom. 6:1-14
Week 4/5	Group Activity	

Alive in Christ

Lesson 13	Children of God	Isa. 43:1-7; John 1:1-18
Lesson 14	Baptism of the Spirit	Acts 2:1-13; 9:1-18
Lesson 15	Spiritual Gifts	Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:1-31
Week 4/5	Group Activity	

Following Christ's Example

Lesson 16	Wisdom	Prov. 3:1-8; Eccl. 7:1-12
Lesson 17	Self-Control	1 Cor. 6:12-20; James 3:1-12
Lesson 18	Practice	Eph. 4:17-5:21
Week 4/5	Group Activity	

About this Bible Study

During the fall of 2004, I had felt a desire to create a Bible study centered around basic themes of Christian living – ways to put the Word of God into practice. I was not moved by tradition or rituals, nor did I want my faith to be shaped by the rules of men, but by the Spirit of God.

Also I was dealing with a crippling form of loneliness: not only was I lonely, but I had lost contact with the community I was in before, I was struggling to meet people in the community I was in at the time, I had no friends I could see at a moment's notice, and because I had a severe hearing loss since birth I couldn't call anybody on the telephone directly. I needed a way to meet people face to face, in a quiet setting, and participate in a group activity which made social interaction easier. A Bible study combined with group activities seemed to provide everything I would need.

Inspired by *The Purpose Driven Life*, by Rick Warren, and emboldened by a year of study at Boston University School of Theology (which for a variety of reason did not work out), I created this Bible study to fulfill my original vision and the need of a ministry within the community I was in.

I do not know how this will play out; I have not completed the group's course yet. But it already has blessed me, for I now have hope that I will make friends from this group, perhaps even long-term relationships. That hope has helped me already, and I want to share this hope with you. Peace.

- Douglas Storms
1/24/2005

Community with a Purpose

Lesson 1: Community

1. What is a community?
2. How is a community different from:
a group of people?

a social club?

a group of friends?

the office or workplace?

Read **Acts 2:42-47**.

3. Who were those people?
4. What did they do together?
5. What was the purpose of this community?
6. What kinds of relationships grew out of it?
7. What kind of community do we have today?
8. What kind of community would we like to have?

Community with a Purpose

Lesson 2: Purpose

1. What is purpose? How would you define it?

2. Why is it important to have a purpose?

3. What is the purpose of the church?

Read **Matthew 22:34-40**.

4. How does a community “love God?”

5. How does a community “love its neighbors?”

6. What is each practice called?

Read **Matthew 28:16-20**.

7. What did Jesus say first?

8. What did he tell the disciples to do?

1.

2.

3.

9. How can a community fulfill each command? What is each practice called?

10. Write the five practices in a list. Rick Warren in *The Purpose Driven Church* says that those are the five things a church must do to survive. Which of these is the purpose of this group?

Community with a Purpose

Lesson 3: Commitment

1. What is a covenant?

2. How is a covenant different from:

a contract?

a mission statement?

an objective on a resume?

a bet with a friend?

Read **Exodus 19:1-6**.

3. Who initiated the covenant?

4. When did God make his covenant to Moses?

5. What were the terms of the covenant?

The Israelites will:

God will:

6. What reason did God give for the Israelites to accept the terms of the covenant?

Read **Matthew 26:26-29**.

7. What is the essential difference between the old covenant and the new one?

8. What are the terms of the new covenant?

We are to:

God will:

9. What are we doing when we take communion?

Read **Matthew 5:33-37**.

10. Why is it important to honor our commitments?

11. How is commitment important to a community?

Love

Lesson 4: He First Loved Us

1. When did you first feel loved? How did you feel?
2. In what way did that feeling of love influence your life?
3. When did you feel not loved? How did you feel then?

Read **1 John 4:7-21**.

4. Where does love come from?
5. What does John say about people who love?
6. How has God showed his love to us?
7. How do we know that God lives in us?
8. Why is there no fear in love?
9. Why should we love others?

Read **John 15:9-17**.

10. Where did Jesus' love come from?

11. How do we remain in Jesus' love?

12. What kind of love was Jesus referring to?

13. What else do we receive when we love?

For reflection, read **Proverbs 17:17**.

Love

Lesson 5: What Kind of Love?

1. What kind of love is in each of the following relationships?

employee-boss/co-workers

casual friends

close friends

married couples

church groups

strangers on a bus or the street

2. How does love work in each of these relationships?

Read **1 Corinthians 13**.

3. How important is love? Why?

4. What are the characteristics of love?

5. Why does Paul say that love never fails?

6. What do verses 8-12 describe?

7. What are the differences among faith, hope and love?

Read **Romans 12:9-21**.

8. What qualities of love is found in Romans?

9. What are we called to do?

10. Why should we bless those who persecute us?

11. How should we deal with evil or injustice?

Love

Lesson 6: Ministry and Mission

1. What is ministry?

2. Who is called to ministry?

Read **Matthew 25:31-46**.

3. What would separate the sheep from the goats?

4. What actions did Jesus say would make a difference?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

5. What would be some examples of missions that would fulfill Christ's call?

1.

2.

3.

6. How important is mission to Jesus?

Read **Luke 10:25-37**.

7. Who was Jesus talking to?

8. Why did Jesus tell the parable?

9. What did the Samaritan do?

10. What make a person a neighbor?

Gathering for Worship

Lesson 7: Encouragement

1. What is encouragement?

2. Why would encouragement be important in a community?

Read **1 Thessalonians 5:11-24**.

3. Why did Paul tell the Thessalonians to encourage one another?

4. What are the ways people can encourage one another?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

5. In what ways do we build each other up?

6. Why should we respect our leaders?

7. How do we know when to warn the idle, encourage the timid, or help the weak?

8. Why is it important not to retaliate? What does Paul suggest instead?

9. Compare 5:16-18, 21b to Philippians 4:4-8.

10. Why should evil be avoided? (compare to verse 14)

Gathering for Worship

Lesson 8: Living in the Spirit

1. What does it mean to live in the Spirit?
2. How do we know that we are living in the Spirit?

Read **Galatians 5:16-26**.

3. How does living by the Spirit help people?
4. What is the sinful nature?
5. Why is the sinful nature opposed to the Spirit?
6. What are the acts of the sinful nature?

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1. | 12. |
| 2. | 13. |
| 3. | 14. |
| 4. | 15. |
| 5. | |
| 6. | |
| 7. | |
| 8. | |
| 9. | |
| 10. | |
| 11. | |

7. What are we doing when we act according to the sinful nature?

8. What are the fruit of the Spirit?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

9. What are we doing when we follow Christ? What happens to the sinful nature?

10. For how long are we to live by the Spirit?

Read **Romans 12:1-2**.

11. How is living by the Spirit an act of worship?

12. Why is this important?

Gathering for Worship

Lesson 9: Rejoicing in the Lord

1. What is worship?
2. Why is praising God important in worship?

Read **Philippians 4:4-9**.

3. What prompted Paul to say “Rejoice in the Lord always?”
4. How should we behave?
5. What should we do when there is conflict among us?
6. What will come after we pray?
7. What else should we do?
8. Why do we worship together?

For reflection, read **Psalms 144, 145, 146, 148, 150**. In each psalm, for what is the psalmist praising God?

The Resurrection of Christ

Lesson 10: Hope

1. What is hope?
2. How does hope help us in our lives?

Read **Jeremiah 29:11**.

3. Who was this message addressed to?
4. What was the meaning of this message?
5. In what context was this message presented?
6. How is hope defined here?

Read **John 3:1-21**.

7. Who was Nicodemus?
8. Why did he see Jesus?
9. What did they discuss?
10. What did Jesus mean about being born again?
11. What is eternal life? How is that a reward worth pursuing?

12. Compare saved to condemned, light to darkness.

13. How does believing in Jesus give us hope?

The Resurrection of Christ

Lesson 11: Faith

1. What is faith?
2. How does faith work in our lives?

Read **Hebrews 11:1**

3. How is faith described here?

Read **Psalm 27: 13-14.**

4. How is faith described here?

Read **Matthew 6:25-34**

5. Why is it important not to worry?
6. What are some things people would worry about?
7. How does worrying demonstrate a lack of faith?
8. What did Jesus say we should do instead?
9. How can we practice that faith in our lives?

The Resurrection of Christ

Lesson 12: Power

1. What is the essential message of Christ?

2. What kind of power do we get from it?

Read **Isaiah 40:27-31**.

3. What complaint was Isaiah responding to?

4. What does the LORD do?

5. How do we receive the LORD's power?

Read **Romans 6:1-14**.

6. How does sin have power over us?

7. What is grace and what kind of power does it have?

8. How do we live in Christ?

9. What is the power of the resurrection?

10. What is the power of the message of the resurrection?

11. How does this help in practicing evangelism?

Alive in Christ

Lesson 13: We are God's Children

1. What does it mean to be children of God?

2. Who are children of God?

Read **Isaiah 43:1-7**.

3. Who chose whom, the LORD or Israel?

4. What is the advantage of being God's children?

5. How valuable are people to God?

Read **John 1:1-18**.

4. Who is the Word?

5. What was in the Word?

6. Who was John? What was his role?

7. Where was the Word? How did the world receive him?

8. What is the benefit of receiving the Word?

9. How is being children of God different from being:

children of natural descent?

children of human decision?

children of a husband's will?

10. What is the significance of the Word becoming flesh?

11. What was the difference between Moses and Jesus Christ?

Alive in Christ

Lesson 14: Baptism of the Spirit

1. What is baptism?

2. What is the purpose of baptism?

Read **Acts 2:1-13**.

3. When and where were the disciples ready to receive the Holy Spirit?

4. What happened?

5. What did the apostles do in Jerusalem?

6. Why was the crowd amazed?

7. How did some dismiss the event?

Read **Acts 9:1-18**.

8. What was Saul planning to do at the time?

9. Where was he when he was blinded?

10. What did Jesus tell him to do?

11. Who did Jesus choose to go to Saul?

12. How did that person respond?

13. What did Saul do after he was healed?

14. What was the meaning of Saul's baptism?

Alive in Christ

Lesson 15: Spiritual Gifts

1. What are spiritual gifts?

2. How do we get them?

Read **Romans 12:3-8**.

3. Why is sober judgment important in a community?

4. What gifts are listed in Romans?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Read **1 Corinthians 12:1-11**.

5. How many gifts, how many Spirits?

6. What spiritual gifts are listed in 1 Corinthians?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

Read **1 Corinthians 12:12-31**.

7. How are these gifts to work together?

8. What is the essential analogy of the church?

9. What is the essential message of this passage?

10. What gifts are mentioned in the last paragraph?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

11. What spiritual gifts do you have? How can you use them?

Following Christ's Example

Lesson 16: Wisdom

1. What is wisdom?
2. Why is wisdom important to us?

Read **Proverbs 3:1-8**.

3. What are the benefits of wisdom?
4. What does it mean to “trust in the LORD?”
5. How do we acknowledge the LORD?
6. What does it mean to “fear the LORD?”

Read **Ecclesiastes 7:1-12**.

7. What things are important, according to the Teacher?
8. In what way is death important?
9. When is sorrow better than laughter? Why?
10. What is the danger of bribery?
11. How should we deal with conflict?

12. Why should we not look back to the “good ol’ days?”

13. What is the advantage of wisdom over money?

14. How is this relevant today?

Following Christ's Example

Lesson 17: Self-Control

1. How do we practice self-control?
2. Why is self-control important for Christians?
3. What is the difference between self-control and obeying the law?

Read **1 Corinthians 6:12-20**.

4. What is the difference between what is permissible and what is beneficial?
5. What is the body for?
6. Why is sexual immorality dangerous?
7. How should we deal with sexual immorality?

Read **James 3:1-12**.

8. Why are teachers held to a higher standard?
9. Why should we be careful of what we say?
10. What are some things the tongue can do that can hurt others?

11. Why can no one tame the tongue? What cannot be controlled?

12. What do their words tell about people?

Following Christ's Example

Lesson 18: Practice

1. What is discipleship?
2. How is practice a part of discipleship?

Read **Ephesians 4:17-5:21**

3. What is the danger of relying on our own understanding?
4. How did we come to know Christ?
5. What do we have to do when we put on the new self?
6. When we speak, what should we say?
7. How do we become imitators of God?
8. Why are obscenity and coarse language discouraged?
9. How is an immoral, impure or greedy person an idolater?
10. How should we deal with such people?
11. Why should we live as children of the light?

12. How is living this way wise?

13. How does music help us follow God?