



small groups

Discussion Guide



Next Steps

1 Thess. 1:1-10

Ice Breaker

(5 minutes)

Andy outlined a very simple, three-phase outline of our life in Christ: Believe > Become > Bestow. Looking back on your life so far, what words would you use to summarize its chapters? Growth > Girth > Geritol? Mirth > Marriage > Menopause? Innocence > Idiocy > Insight? Womb > World > Wisdom? Share your "life outline" with your group. (Alliteration not required.)

Lesson Review

(35 minutes)

Read 1 Thess. 1:1-10

Andy said, having *believed* in Jesus and *become* more mature in faith, we are called to *bestow* that blessing upon others, joining God in his mission to rescue and renew that which was lost and broken. Andy said there are two ways that we do that.

Live Question-Begging Lives

Read 1 Peter 2:11-12 and 3:14-16

These verses assume that the lives of Christ-followers will 1) be uncommonly virtuous and patient in suffering, and 2) be visible to others.

As an example, Andy used the adventures of Paul and Silas in Philippi and Thessalonica.

Read Acts 16:16-17:9

Paul and Silas sang worship songs in prison with bleeding backs, and as soon as they were released, they continued to carry their message to the lost despite threats of further persecution.

Andy said such lives will elicit two questions.

THE SHALOM QUESTION: "HOW CAN YOU BE SO CALM?"

Discuss

- Are modern Christians known for their serenity in suffering?
- What suffering are you enduring right now?

THE AGAPE QUESTION: "WHY DO YOU CARE SO MUCH?"

Discuss

- Are modern Christians known for caring?
- Who are you caring for right now?

Share God's Life-Giving Story

Andy said it's not enough just to live good lives. As the verses in 1 Peter point out, we must add truthful words to our good works. Andy sorted the situations where we can do this into two categories.

INFORMALLY

Accidental associations – the people in your life whom you didn't choose.

FORMALLY

Purposeful associations – the people in your life you did choose to invest in.

These two steps Andy described – living question-begging lives and sharing God's life-giving story – correlate to other Biblical dualities: grace and truth, death and resurrection, salt and light.

Read Matt. 5:13-16

Discuss

- How does the pattern of salt and light relate to Andy's sermon?
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Application

(20 minutes)

Andy told about Professor Hendricks from Dallas Theological Seminary who kept the focus of his students' ministries on people by asking "Who are your people?"

Discuss

- Who are your people? In whom are you investing? List at least one person in both the formal and informal categories.
- Which piece of Andy's message stuck out to you most? Where is God calling you to take a next step?

