

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 11.22.2020

HOW THE SPIRIT LEADS US – ACTS 8:26-40

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

What is “blind faith”? It is not a technical term, but we usually know what people mean when they say it. In general, the term means to trust that something good will happen or that all will be well, even though there's not a bit of evidence to back up that hope. It is a belief without true understanding, perception, or discrimination. For Christians, faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1). It is a hope only found in Jesus. In this week's study, Philip demonstrates his faith as the Spirit leads him away from his successes in Samaria to share the good news of Christ elsewhere. Philip preached Christ to Samaria and multitudes responded in one accord. Things were going well in Samaria and then an angel of the Lord told Philip to leave Samaria and go to the barren desert. This didn't make much sense at the time, but Philip had faith and obeyed God's direction. Sometimes, God doesn't show us the whole plan. Instead, He leads us one step at a time, not revealing what the second or third step might be. Such is the nature of true obedience to God. Let's get into our study.

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What stood out to you during this week's study?
2. Have you ever taken a blind step of faith? Was it easy to make that first step? Why or why not?

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 8:27-33

D.L. Moody once asked a man about his soul, and the man replied, “It's none of your business!” “Oh, yes, it is my business!” Moody said, and the man immediately exclaimed, “Then you must be D.L. Moody!” In this man's eyes, it was the business of a well-known evangelist to preach the gospel; however, it is actually the business of every Christian to share the gospel with others, and to do it without fear or apology (Wiersbe). Philip understood the business of a Christian. He arose, followed God's direction, and ran to sow the seeds of the Gospel. Along the way, he encountered an Ethiopian who was reading and could not understand the scroll of Isaiah 53. “The Gospel is a living seed,” said Preston Parrish, Executive Vice President of Ministries at BGEA. “When this message is proclaimed and sown into hearts and lives, God blesses it as He blesses no other message.

1. In what ways is spreading the gospel like sowing seeds? (Luke 8:1-15)
2. How was the gospel sown in your life before you became a believer?
3. Philip took steps of faith and ran to the Ethiopian of great authority. Pastor Ray mentioned “God has the worlds attention right now”. How might we leverage this attention and run to the lost as Philip did?
4. The Ethiopian was reading the scroll of Isaiah 53, but did not understand it. Philip then preached Christ through this Old Testament Prophecy. Pastor Ray mentioned every book of the Old Testament points to Jesus. How might this change the way you view and read the Old Testament scriptures?
5. Philip was ready to preach the gospel. How might we be ready to preach the gospel? (2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 3:15)

Prepare! in 2020

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 8:34-40

In some Bible translations, verse 37 is omitted; however, the verse is certainly not unbiblical. Referencing Romans 3:10 “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”. Philip said, if you believe with all your heart, you may be baptized in response to the eunuch question. Baptism is for those who profess Christ as their Lord and Savior. The immersion (Greek: Baptizo) symbolizes being buried in death with Christ. The coming out of the water is a picture of being raised to life with Christ. To be baptized in Christ illustrates new life that comes only by faith (Romans 6:3-4).

6. The Ethiopian began to desire salvation as Philip preached Christ and asked what hindered him from being baptized. It is not enough for the lost sinner to desire salvation and baptism; he or she must confess with mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 10:9-10). What does it mean to believe in the heart?
7. Have you been baptized? What was the experience like?
8. What is the importance of baptism in the Christian life? Can one be baptized and not have salvation? Why or why not? (Acts 8:37, Romans 10:9-10)

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

In October 1857, English missionary J. Hudson Taylor began ministering to Ningpo, China and he led a Mr. Nyi to Christ. The man was overjoyed and wanted to share his faith with others. “How long have you had the good tidings in England?” Mr. Nyi asked Hudson Taylor one day. Taylor acknowledged that England had known the gospel for many centuries. “My father died seeking the truth,” said Mr. Nyi. “Why didn’t you come sooner?” Taylor had no answer to that penetrating question.

1. How can you be more in tune to the leading of the Holy Spirit in your life?
2. How can you incorporate Philip’s example of obedience into your own witnessing?
3. How can you witness more in your daily routine this week?

PRAYER

Father God,

Thank You for demonstrating Your love for us through Your beloved Son Jesus. Thank You for the Lamb, as described in Isaiah 53, Who was sacrificed for our sins. Thank You for raising Jesus from the dead. Thank You for a saving us. Now Holy Spirit, lead us to go in faith, if necessary, one step at a time, making disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Revelation 7:9-10)