

The Gathering Community Group Guide

re|ACTS – Week 9 // Being Thankful in Upside-Down Moments

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Acts 5:17-42

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Consider...

Use the summary and questions to **BRIEFLY** review this week's message for those in the group:

Message Summary

All of us can relate to the ups and downs of life, and through the first 5 chapters of Acts, we've seen the early church experience the same upside-down moments we do. The only difference is that they appeared to have been genuinely thankful for the moments that we aren't so thankful for, which begs the question, "How can we stay thankful when our worlds are turned upside-down?" Pastor Paul offered 3 truths that can help us:

1. **Upside-down moments happen to everyone.** It feels good to think that if we love Jesus enough, we'll never have trouble. But according to John 16:33, loving Jesus almost guarantees trouble. Maybe, the best thing we can do is to stop avoiding what Jesus told us to expect.
2. **Upside-down moments are part of a movement.** So how do we stand firm in hard times? We recognize that the moments we experience are temporary, and even though they may freeze us, they are part of a movement that actually frees us. Having this perspective can help us in upside-down moments.
3. **The movement is greater than the moment.** Do you know why the apostles rejoiced after being imprisoned and flogged in Acts 5? It was because their upside-down moment played a role in the bigger picture of moving the kingdom of God along! They knew that the movement of God's kingdom was much bigger than the suffering of the moment. They were counted worthy!

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What was one helpful, eye-opening, or troubling insight or principle from this week's message?
- Simply reading Romans 5:3-5, James 1:2-4, and John 16:33 makes it pretty obvious that following Jesus while living in this world will usually lead to troubling moments. Why, then, do you think we are so often surprised, or caught off guard, when hard times happen?
- How can accepting trouble help us prepare for it? How can we keep that acceptance from looking like we're giving up?
- Pastor Paul talked a lot about the idea of each one of us being on a conveyor belt as we walk with Jesus. How does seeing hard moments in light of a greater movement help us in difficult times?
- Isaiah 53:3 says Jesus was a man of many sorrows. The New Living Translation says he was "acquainted with deepest grief." How does having a Savior who is familiar with our troubles help us live with greater confidence in the upside-down moments we experience? (see Hebrews 4:15-16)

Commit...

Think and pray through your answers to the following questions in order to commit your life to living out what you've learned this week:

- What are some of the main truths/passages that God wants you to know from this message?
- Based on that truth/passage, what is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?