

Community Group Guide

@ our core – Uncontainable Growth

The Gathering

Paul Jenkins

April 1, 2012

Luke 5:1-11

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. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Summary

This week's message began looking at the values that fall under the third of our "core four" values: the UNCONTAINABLE kingdom of Jesus. In this teaching, Paul taught about why we value **Uncontainable Growth** and why we expect and prepare for God to multiply His kingdom exponentially through us. We learned 5 things that we need to rethink if we are to experience uncontainable growth:

1. **Our PLANS:** Peter and his men had fished unsuccessfully all night long and had no plans to go fish again, especially right away in the morning. Sometimes the plans God has for us come at what seems to be the most inconvenient times, but Peter was willing to change his plans and as a result caught something uncontainable.
2. **Our PRIORITIES:** Peter had a change of priorities, too. He was an expert at his trade, and so he knew that what Jesus was asking him to do wasn't the best way to fish, and yet his top priority became obedience. He found that when he obeyed, even if things weren't done exactly right, Jesus blessed him.
3. **Our PARTNERSHIPS:** It's easy to get narrow when we think of partnering with others, because we want them to agree with us and how we do things, but Peter found that partnerships can sometimes be born simply because we need help with the uncontainable growth God gives us. For Peter, the only requirement to partnership after the great catch was having a boat, a net, and being willing.

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4. **Our PRIDE:** Peter's response to the uncontainable catch wasn't to tell Jesus what a great fisherman Jesus was, but rather to fall on his face and declare himself to be a sinful man. Something about the uncontainable makes us realize how little we had to do with it and we see ourselves in light of Who Jesus is.
5. **Our PURPOSE:** Simply put, before "the catch" Peter was a fisherman who measured his success with scales, but after, he had a new purpose, a new direction, and he became of fisher of men who measured his success in souls. He found a purpose worth leaving his stuff behind for!

Discuss

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

- Have someone read Isaiah 9:7. Discuss what we can learn from this verse about the way that God's kingdom grows. What do you think it means when it talks about God's zeal accomplishing this?
- In the message, Paul talked about quick addition versus slow multiplication. What are the pros and cons of each method? Why do you think we are so attracted to fast growth?
- In Luke 5:4, we read about Jesus sending Peter back out to fish again, something that Peter wasn't planning on and probably didn't want to do after a tiring night of unsuccessful fishing. Paul pointed out that God's plans rarely involve our convenience and that often the greatest spiritual victories come in our weakest moments (2 Corinthians 12:9). Discuss some times in your life when you saw God move through you when you were tired and had to change your plans.
- What a great video of the couple who did everything wrong when they invited their neighbor to church! Even though they did it wrong, they were obedient and God blessed it! Peter found that Jesus did that with him, too. Obedience to the command of Jesus became a greater priority than doing it the right way. How does this apply to your life currently?
- Seeing such an uncontainable catch of fish changed the way Peter saw his partners. He simply needed more boats and nets to help. Do you think uncontainable growth should make it easier to partner with others, or harder? What obstacles stand in the way of true ministry partnerships?
- The catch opened his eyes to the greatness of Christ, and he repented of his pride (Luke 5:8-9). He realized that as good as he was at fishing, he could never have caught something so great, and he was speechless at what was happening. Describe times in your life when you've been left speechless at a move of God.
- The best part of uncontainable growth is that it changes our purpose! No longer are we "just" a teacher, a technician, a store owner, or a manager. When we see the overwhelming harvest ready to be harvested (John 4:35), we see ourselves as evangelists wherever we are and whatever we do! Pray for your group and ask the Lord of the harvest to send each of you out this week to work the fields (Matthew 9:38).

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.