Ground Zero Bible Study Participant Guide

DESCRIPTION

Ground Zero is an Integrated Bible Study that digs into discipleship distinctives which are helpful for a planting context, while also encouraging students to consider the mission field as the Lord is working in their own hearts. There are clear application questions that connect to Black culture in general, the Black community on campus, and people's personal networks at home. The Bible Studies also incorporate inductive lines of questioning, but are discussion-based instead of investigative. The authors designed this curriculum to work in sequence. It is also proven to be most effective when students make a commitment to complete all four Bible Studies in the series. This participant guide should be used in accompaniment with the Ground Zero Bible Study Leader Guide.

GUIDE OVERVIEW

Bible Study 1: Mark 5:24-34 "Deal with Yourself"

Bible Study 2: Luke 10:25-37 "Challenge How you Love Others"

Bible Study 3: Luke 8:4-15 "Assess Where You Are"

Bible Study 4: Matthew 25:14-30 "Avoid Wasting God's Goods"

Deal With Yourself

"Finding the Helpful Solutions for Your Suffering"

Mark 5:24b-34 (New International Version)

READ

24b A large crowd followed and pressed around him. 25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." 29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" 31 "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?' "

32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."

DISCUSS

- The crowd of people and this woman have very different experiences with Jesus. The woman received healing, but the crowd received nothing. What do you think prevents others in the crowd from experiencing healing from Jesus that day? What is keeping you from experiencing freedom from suffering like those in the crowd who touched Jesus, but did not experience His power?

- The woman understood enough about the power of Jesus to realize how simple it was to receive healing. Are there people in your life that have convinced you that a relationship with Jesus is complex or inaccessible? How does this story encourage you in your spiritual journey?

- Jesus tells this woman her faith is what healed her. Jesus also calls her daughter even though her issue might have caused others in her life, her relationships, and/or her culture to reject her. How does Jesus including you in the family provide healing or hope in the midst of your suffering? What do you need to hear about Jesus to experience His healing?

- When it was time to be bold and declare about the healing she received from Jesus at His request, she pushed through her fear and spoke her whole truth. What are some bad consequences you might experience if you are bold in your witness about the true power and healing of Jesus? What would it take for you to push through any fears or apprehensions to boldly proclaim truth?

RESPONSE & REFLECT

Assess what God is doing in your heart right now. The woman in the story recognized she could not receive the healing she desired from the different physicians she turned to. What "physicians" is God inviting you to turn away from? How can you turn to helpful solutions over the next week to experience healing from your suffering?

Challenge How You Love Others

"Practice What Jesus REALLY Preached"

Luke 10:25-37 (New International Version)

READ

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he
asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 "What is written in the Law?"
he replied. "How do you read it?" 27 He answered, "'Love the Lord your God
with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all
your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 "You have answered
correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." 29 But he wanted to justify
himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They
stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down
the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the
place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and
when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then
he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two
denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any
extra expenses you may have.'

36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" 37 The expert
in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

DISCUSS

- Religious people at times try to use scripture to justify themselves, even when they know their actions are not aligned with what the Lord desires. **Why might the religious leader be trying to look to Jesus to justify who he is to love? Who have you overlooked or rejected through your own justifications?**

- View yourself as the stripped one (meaning you are naked), who is experiencing a beat down at the hand of strangers. You are lying half dead, and your beat down has exacerbated you psychologically and emotionally because those who are supposed to help, instead, ignore you. **Discuss your thoughts and feelings in this moment as you identify with the beaten man.**

- Considering the law given in Numbers 19:11, if these religious people tried to assist the man and he was dead, they would be unable to worship or connect with their community for a week. **Taking the Law and the people's positions into consideration, do you think the priest and Levite are justified in their actions? Why or why not? Knowing the Law of Moses given by God the Father in the Old Testament, why would Jesus use the priest's and Levite's responses as an example of what not to do? Identify some marginalized people whom the church, today or throughout history, has justified as ignorable or avoidable. How could Jesus's parable bring healing to the marginalized beat down by religious hurt?**

- Even with the high level of hostility the Jewish man still experienced the Samaritan's mercy which included both compassion and presence.. **Consider one of the people you identified above as someone you have overlooked or rejected. What would it look like to show both compassion and be present for them in a time of pain and suffering?**

- The victim, as a result, felt cared for as a person to the point where not only was his health restored, but also his humanity. **If you identify most with the beaten down man in this parable, how might others love on you in a way where you experience total restoration for your mind, body, spirit, and soul? If you identify with religious leaders in this story, how might God be inviting you to recognize everyone as your neighbor to whom you must show love? As we practice what Jesus really preached, how can we use this parable to rewrite what it looks like to be a loving and merciful follower of Jesus?**

RESPONSE & REFLECT

Assess who is in your current "Neighbor" circle. Considering who is inside and outside your circle, in what ways is God inviting you to challenge how you love others? In an effort to practice what Jesus REALLY preached, pick one person (or people group) who you justified as not being your neighbor. Identify one act of compassion or presence you will complete for them this week. Detail what you will do and then spend some time reflecting on the lesson as one source of encouragement for your follow-through.

Assess Where You Are
"The Necessity of Good Soil"
Luke 8:4-15 (New International Version)

READ

4 While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: 5 "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. 6 Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown."

When he said this, he called out, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

9 His disciples asked him what this parable meant. 10 He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that,"'though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.'

11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. 12 Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. 14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. 15 But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

DISCUSS

- As the seed was sowed, it was not the seed itself that differed, but instead the soil types that varied. Each soil type represents the hearts of the various people hearing the teachings from Jesus. What draws us to sometimes search for other outlets of truth?

- Jesus's audience that day included His twelve disciples and the crowds of people representing every soil type presented in this parable. In your own words, describe what happens to the seed when planted in each soil type. Share examples of times your heart condition was a representation of the different soil types.

- When you consider the analogy to agriculture, the reality is all soil can become good soil. Using your past soil type stories shared and the example given, identify a "tool" that could have turned your unproductive soil good.

- Jesus desired for people to hear His word and respond in a way that allowed for crop production. What does it look like to multiply what we receive from the Lord? During your interactions with others, why is it important to remember that they also have different heart soil types?

- Large crowds continued to gather, but only few had fertile hearts ready to produce. How would it transform your life and the lives of those around you to have a heart ready for produce at all times?

RESPONSE & REFLECT

Assess your current reality. Which soil type best describes where your heart is right now? What tools might God be inviting you to consider using? What next step can you take over the next week to allow the proper tool to create a more fertile good soil ready to receive from the Lord?

Avoid Wasting God's Good

"Using Your Gifts to Bring Great Impact"

Matthew 25:14-30 (New International Version)

READ

14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. 15 To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. 17 So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. 18 But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.' 21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

22 "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.' 23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

24 "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' 26 "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

28 "'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. 29 For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

DISCUSS

- This parable focuses on the responses of a master to his three servants who were given bags of money for while he was away. Why do you think the boss gave the money amounts based on the servants' abilities and not the servants' potential? What could be the gain or loss for the master based on how much he gave each servant?

- The Lord invests in His people by His actions, His communication through the Scriptures, His healing mentally or spiritually, His provisions financially or relationally, all of these and more are valuables the Lord shares with us. What are valuables you received from the Lord? What makes them valuable?

- When someone makes an investment, the goal is a bigger return in the end. How should you use your gifts, skills, and abilities to bring the Lord a return? How does His investment in you ultimately grow His kingdom?

- The two servants who doubled the investment were extended the same sentiments of gratitude in response. If the Lord asked you today for an account of what you have done with His investment in you, would He have the same response? Why or why not? What can you do to further grow His investment in you as it relates to serving on your college campus?

- The servant's decision to bury the money confirms his understanding of the value of his master's investment. Why is it important to realize the servant's decision not to use his gifts was a result of fear and/or laziness? How might God's purposes in you not be fulfilled because He chooses to use someone else? Using the master's responses as an indicator of how the Lord might respond, write three ways you will avoid allowing fear and/ or laziness to cause you to waste God's investment in you.

RESPONSE & REFLECT

Assess what God has entrusted you with. Take some time to meditate on all of your responses. Conclude by writing a letter of action to God. Share your acknowledgment of the valuable things from the Lord, your gratitude for the ways He invests in you, your confession of the times you wasted God's valuables due to your fear, laziness, etc., and your intentions for using your gifts, skills, and abilities to grow God's kingdom. How will you use the next week to avoid wasting God's good to bring a greater impact within your spheres of influence?