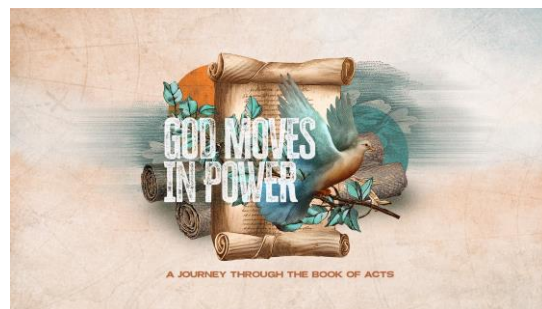


Group Discussion Guide | October 4

God Moves in Power through the Church

Series overview and leader instructions



Overview

Our current sermon series, “God Moves in Power,” is a journey through the book of Acts, where we witness the Holy Spirit at work through prayer, the gospel, the Church, and ordinary people. As we explore the story of the early church, we’ll discover that the same God who moved powerfully then is still moving today. This series will challenge and encourage us to live with bold faith, expectant prayer, and a willingness to join God’s ongoing mission in the world. The story of Acts is far from over and we’re invited to be a part of it.

Note: This series will be a thematic walk through the Book of Acts rather than a chapter by chapter or verse-by-verse study.

Bible Lab

Each week, in addition to sermon discussion questions, groups are invited to participate in “Bible Lab,” an interactive Scripture reading experience. Your group will read a different text each time you gather, but the questions you ask will be the same, inviting you to consider what you notice about God, humanity, and yourself in each passage. By providing the same questions each week, we hope to offer a Bible-reading strategy that puts the emphasis first on God and the church/others before drawing a personal application.

It could be tempting for your group to skip the Bible Lab, but we *strongly* encourage you to engage with it each week, allowing God’s Word to form your group and each person in it.

Reading Plan

We have created a reading plan to accompany this sermon series. You can find it here: [Acts Series Resources](#). You can download the reading plan or subscribe to receive the daily devotional guide each week, which contains the reading plan and reflection questions.

Consider committing to completing the reading plan as a group. Here are questions you can use (during your life group time, over a meal, or however you choose) to reflect on the reading plan each week:

- As you read, what resonated with you?
- What questions came up in your mind?
- What challenged you from God’s Word?

Opening reflection questions (10 minutes)

This week we will explore the momentous growth and impact of the early church as they aligned themselves with God’s heart and mission!

In Acts 11:23 we read, “When [Barnabas] arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them to all remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.” Take a moment to reflect:

- How have you seen and experienced the “grace of God” in the church?
- How have you seen the grace of God in your own life?

Bible Lab (20 minutes)

All through the God Moves in Power series, we’ll be spending time each week in what we’re calling “Bible Lab.” Bible Lab consists of three “movements.” In the first movement, we will read the passage out loud, paying attention to what is happening in the passage. In the second movement, we’ll read it out loud again, noticing what it teaches about God, people, and ourselves. In the third movement, we will silently read the passage and share what next step the passage has for us.

***Note:** See the last page of this document for a guide you can provide your group members if desired. You could print one for each person, collect them after Bible Lab, and reuse the same guide each week.*

Movement 1

*Invite everyone to turn to **Acts 11:19-26***

The first time through, we want to get an overview. As we listen, ask yourself:

- What is going on in this passage?
- What caught your attention?
- What questions arise as you listen?

Read Acts 11:19-26 out loud or invite someone else to do so. When you are finished, discuss your group’s answers to the questions above. Feel free to break into groups of 2–3.

Movement 2

The second time through, we want to consider what the passage reveals about God and His people. As we listen, ask yourself:

- What does this passage show you about God? The work of the Holy Spirit?
- What do these verses reveal to us about the body of Christ, the Church?

Read Acts 11:19-26 out loud or invite someone else to do so. When you are finished, discuss your group’s answers to the questions above. Feel free to break into groups of 2–3.

Movement 3

Each of us will now take a few moments to read Acts 11:19-26 silently to ourselves. As you read, prayerfully consider this question:

- Lord, what are You inviting me to believe, receive, or do in response to this passage?

Allow time for everyone to read and reflect. Then invite anyone who would like to share a brief response.

*When the time of sharing is done, pray a short prayer. You may use these words based on James 1:22 or something similar: **“Lord, thank You for this time in Your Word. May we not merely listen to the word and so deceive ourselves. May we do what it says. And may we encourage each other in that pursuit. Amen.”***

Discussion of sermon and Scripture (20 minutes)

In his sermon, Pastor Jeff Faull mentioned that “Spiritual power and momentum comes when we align ourselves with God and his agenda and cooperate with Him.”

- Where do you see alignment and cooperation with God in our church? In your life group? In your life personally?
- Where do you sense God inviting you to align more closely with His purposes? What might that look like practically?
- What is one area where it feels easier to pursue your own agenda than God's agenda?

Throughout the book of Acts, we see how the early church often grew despite great persecution, hardship, and suffering.

- What stands out to you about the way the early church responded to hardship? How does this influence the perspective you have on suffering?
- Have you ever seen God bring growth, maturity, or unexpected good through a difficult season?
- How can hardship become an opportunity to depend more deeply on God rather than pull away from Him?

In Acts 11, we observe the actions of both God and the early church. Pastor Jeff highlighted three of these actions:

1. The early church looked beyond themselves and God put His hand on them.
2. The early church majored in encouraging faithfulness while God displayed His grace.
3. The early church met for learning and God gave them His name.

As you reflect on each one consider:

- What stands out to you about the actions of the early church? What stands out to you about God's response?
- What most encourages you?
- What challenges you? Where do you sense God inviting you, your life group, our church to grow?
- How do you desire to see God move in power in our church, in our city, in your group, in your own life?

Prayer and upcoming events (15 minutes)

If you haven't already, take some time to reflect on the final question: How do you desire to see God move in power in our church, in our city, in your group, in your life?

To close your time together, spend a few moments sharing these desires with God in prayer. Thank Him for the ways He is already at work and ask Him to continue moving in power through His people. Pray for the grace, courage, and boldness to cooperate with His work and align your lives with his purposes. Ask Him to help you remain attentive and surrendered to His leading.

You may choose to break into groups of 2–3 to pray together or remain as a whole group.

Another option is to invite each person to share a one-phrase prayer that expresses what they long to see God do (healing, restoration, hope, generosity, belonging, unity, faith, courage, love, etc.). After everyone has shared, have one person close by praying over these desires and asking God to accomplish his purposes.

Bible Lab Questions

The following may be used to guide each week's Bible Lab time.

Movement 1

The first time through this week's Scripture, we want to get an overview. As we listen, ask yourself:

- What is going on in this passage?
- What caught your attention?
- What questions arise as you listen?

Listen as the passage is read out loud then discuss your answers to the questions above.

Movement 2

The second time through, we want to consider what the passage reveals about God and His people. As we listen, ask yourself:

- What does this passage show you about God? The work of the Holy Spirit?
- What do these verses reveal to us about the body of Christ, the Church?

Listen as the passage is read out loud then discuss your answers to the questions above.

Movement 3

Each of us will now take a few moments to read the passage silently to ourselves. As you read, prayerfully consider this question:

- Lord, what are You inviting me to believe, receive, or do in response to this passage?

After a time of reflection, everyone will be given the opportunity to share their response.