

MAKE
CHURCH
GREAT AGAIN!

SMALL GROUP GUIDE



SESSION ONE:

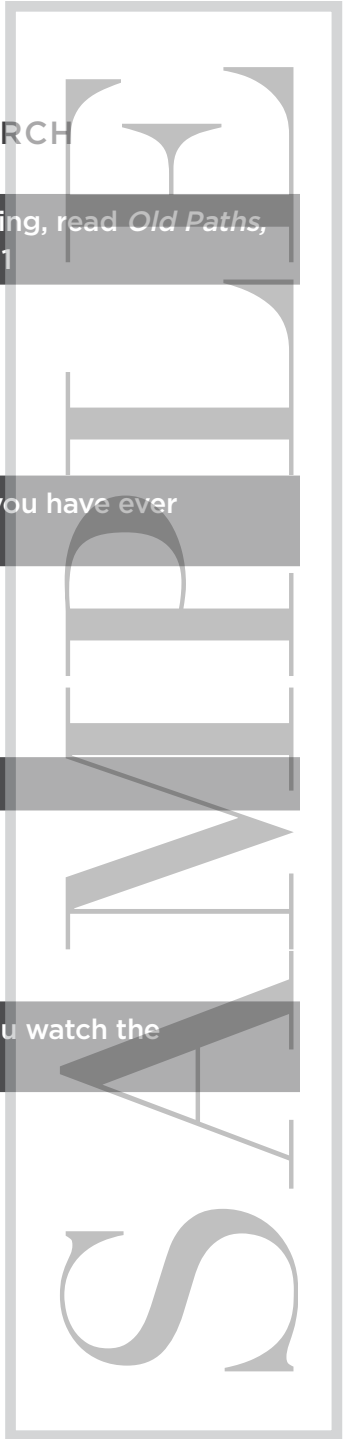
THE PICTURE OF A GREAT CHURCH

Read (optional): Before the first gathering, read *Old Paths, New Power* - Introduction and Chapter 1

Reflect: Who was the greatest person you have ever known personally?

What made them great? (5 min)

Record: Write down your insights as you watch the video (10 min)



Relate:

1. In what ways is the church in America “great” today? In what ways is it not so great? (5 min)
2. When you think about the “scoreboard” of the effectiveness of the church, what do you think is threatening the church today – both internally and externally? (5 min)
3. Take a look at a few passages that describe the commitment and culture of believers in the early church. (See Acts 1:14; 2:1, 40-41, 42-47; 4:1-4, 4:23-31; 5:11-13, 19-21, 40-42) How would you summarize some of the key indicators of their greatness? (15 min)
4. Knowing that all of this was occurring in the face of persecution from Jewish leaders and under the watchful eye of a very pagan government (Rome), what attitude did these believers seem to have toward the government? (See Mark 12:17; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; 1 Peter 2:17) In light of this, what one thing should you recommit to in these days as it relates to the government? (10 min)

Pray the Word.

Read Acts 4:23-31. Keeping your Bibles open, pray along these lines:

- **He Is Worthy!** In Acts 4:24-28 the early church declared that God was the source of all life, the controller of all things and his word gives perspective to all circumstances. They affirmed these truths as they prayed, even though they faced hostility and persecution

Pray together finishing these sentences, one after the other . . .

"I praise you Lord that You created _____"

After a couple of minutes, transition to this expression of praise:

"I praise You Lord that You are still in charge of _____"

- **We are Needy!** Based on their trust in God's word, the early disciples requested boldness to speak the word of God. He answered by filling them with his Spirit and sending them back out into a hostile culture with the life-giving message of the gospel.

Continue in prayer together, completing these thoughts that are reflected in the passage:

"Help me Lord to trust the truth of your word in my life even though _____"

After a couple of minutes, transition to this focus:

"Lord, I know that you see _____ (difficult situation),

fill me with your Holy Spirit so that I can _____"

After a couple of minutes, conclude with this focus:

Lord, give me boldness that I might share the message of the gospel with _____ (name)

Conclude by reciting together this prayer from an old hymn titled, “Lead On O King Eternal”

*Lead on, O King eternal,
the day of march has come;
henceforth in fields of conquest
your tents will be our home.
Through days of preparation
your grace has made us strong;
and now, O King eternal,
we lift our battle song.*

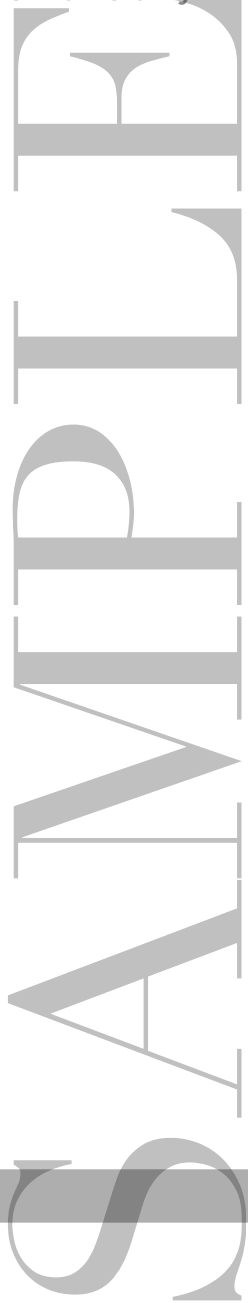
*Lead on, O King eternal,
till sin’s fierce war shall cease,
and holiness shall whisper
the sweet amen of peace.
For not with swords’ loud clashing
or roll of stirring drums
with deeds of love and mercy
the heavenly kingdom comes.*

*Lead on, O King eternal;
we follow, not with fears,
for gladness breaks like morning
wherever your face appears.
Your cross is lifted o’er us,
we journey in its light;
the crown awaits the conquest;
lead on, O God of might.*

In Jesus name – Amen!

Reading for next week:

Old Paths, New Power – Chapters 2, 3 and 12



SESSION TWO:

THE PORTRAIT OF A GREAT CHRISTIAN

Read: Old Paths, New Power - Chapters 2, 3 and 12

Reflect: What do you think are the top three characteristics of a “great” Christian? (5 min)

Record: Write down your insights as you watch the video (10 min)

Relate:

1. Read Acts 6:1-7, where we see another description of the greatness of the early church. What key traits about the function and focus of the church stand out in this story? (10 min)
2. Notice the three characteristics of the men who were selected to oversee the widow-feeding program (vs. 3). How would you recognize each of those characteristics in someone’s life today? (10 min)



3. Notice the New Testament description of wisdom given in James 3:17 & 18. Why are these specific qualities important if we are to have powerful gospel influence on the culture today? (15 min)
4. Have someone in the group read aloud the characteristics of two of these men (Stephen and Phillip), as described on pgs. 208-210 of *Old Paths, New Power*. Do you think God could use you in a similar way? Why or why not? (15 min)

Pray the Word

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-31. Keeping your Bibles open, pray along these lines:

- **He is worthy!** This passage inspires us with the truths that Christ and His gospel are the power and wisdom of God for us, in us and through us in this hostile world. We are encouraged in this passage to realize that God chose us in Christ, not because of our qualifications, but because of His purpose to use common people for His glory. Take some time to praise the Lord Jesus for these realities.

"Lord Jesus, I praise You that You are the power of God, and your power is greater than _____"

"Lord Jesus, I praise You that You are the wisdom of God and your wisdom is greater than _____"

"Thank you Lord that you chose me even though I was _____"

- **We are needy!** God intends to show his power and wisdom in and through us. *“Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”* (v. 24) Take time to express your need for His provision in your life.

“Lord, I am trusting You to be my wisdom as I _____”

“Lord, I am trusting in your power in my life to _____”

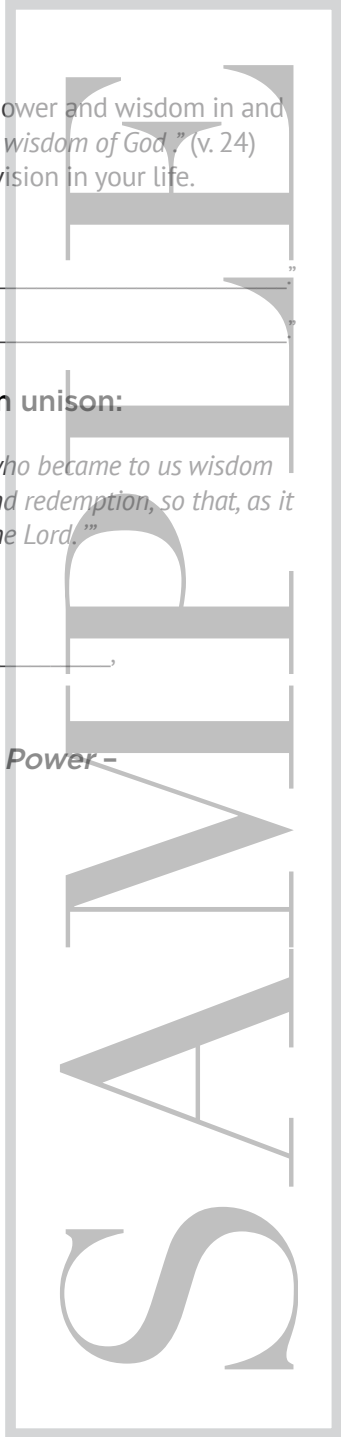
As you conclude, read vs. 30-31 aloud in unison:

“And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”

Close with this final prayer expression:

“Lord this week as we _____
let us boast in you alone!”

**Reading for next week: *Old Paths, New Power* -
Chapters 4, 10, Appendices 1 & 3**





SAMPLE