

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

FEB. 8 & 9 - ACTS 14 - PAUL & BARNABAS' ROAD TRIP

OPENING QUESTION

- **Matt opened with the illustration of George Mueller, and the establishing of an orphanage that he felt God called him to. He never asked anyone for anything but trusted that God would provide all his needs. He never took a salary or took out a loan. God told him He would provide, so Mueller didn't worry about the practical things; he just trusted. God gave him a mission, and Mueller knew that God would see it through and give him what he needed.**
 - What struck you in this illustration? How does this hit you personally? Have you ever heard or experienced personally stories of God's miraculous provision?
 - What are we to do with "spiritual giants" like Mueller? How does it intersect with our lives? What are we to do with stories like this?

READ TOGETHER

Acts 14

BIG IDEA

God has a mission for each of us, and we succeed in it only by His hand.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Paul and Barnabas continue in their mission. It's not a mission they came up with, but one that God gave to them.
 - How might God show us or convey to us what our particular mission is? How might He make this known to each of us?
 - Has God given you a particular mission? What do you sense it is?
- Four Things to know about God's mission for you:
 1. The nature of God's mission. When Paul and Barnabas went on their mission, some respond with spurning God's message. Others were divided. Others agreed with them. Some were aggressively opposed. It shows us that God's mission is also called "spiritual warfare". There is an enemy, and a there is a battle.
 - How has this "spiritual warfare" played out in your life and mission?
 - What tactics might the enemy use to thwart you in your mission?
 - How do we guard our hearts from this? What do we do?
 2. Even though God's mission was spiritual warfare... they didn't run. They stayed there and did the hard work. They remained and battled for these people's salvation. Even through discouragement, even when hearts seemed hard, or when opposition was relentless.
 - What are some stories of perseverance and hard work through difficulty, either in your own life or from scripture?
 - What in your life feels like a battlefield right now? Where in your life is there spiritual warfare? What would it look like for you to persevere and "remain" steadfast?
 3. Paul and Barnabas were doing everything they could, but their fruitfulness and success came because God was empowering them. God's mission requires His hand in order to succeed. It is not us who changes hearts, but God.

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- Too often we can forget that it is only by God's hand that people will change. Have you ever experienced the truth of this; where your efforts were lacking but God still came through in a miraculous way?
 - Read Psalm 127:1-2 - What are you trying to do, that if God doesn't come through and answer it and make it happen... that you are convinced it will never happen?
 - What do we learn from this principle? What does this show us?
4. The town had a divided opinion of Paul and Barnabas. Then a mob attempted to kill them. They eventually fled, and began to preach the Good News in a different town. Because God's mission is spiritual warfare, it requires great wisdom and discernment. After persevering for a time, they sensed it was time to go.
- Listening to God's voice is critical. Have you ever asked Him to lead you, to guide you and to give you direction? What was the result?
 - For those who practice not only intercessory prayer, but also listening prayer – what does it look like? How do you engage in it? What has been the fruit of it in your life?
 - Have you ever experienced receiving wisdom and guidance from God? How did you receive it? How did you test it?

PRAYER

- We need to pray for each other. For our mission, both as the people of God, and for personal mission that God has given us.
- Pray for one another, especially when it comes to areas of obvious spiritual warfare.
- Pray for guidance, wisdom, God's hand, and maybe for someone's mission to become clear to them!

NEXT STEP

- It is abundantly obvious that Paul and Barnabas listened to God, and heard Him speak. If this is an area of weakness, non-engagement or confusion for you or your group, a great next step would be to engage with one of the following:
 1. "The Power of a Whisper" by Bill Hybels. A small group video curriculum. Available on RightNowMedia.org (your Small Group Leader should have access!)
 2. "Hearing God" by Dallas Willard. A great book that walks through the theology and practice of listening prayer
 3. "Walking with God" by John Eldridge. A great book that looks at what a life of two-way communication with God is like.
- This week, set aside 10 minutes a day to pray. Use some of that time to just listen to God, and see what He may impress on your heart. Write it down and let your group know next week.

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