

# Small Group Discussion Guide

“The Backwards Life” (pt. 2) – 3/16/2014

**Scripture:** John 12:36-50

**Bottom Line:** Our mission is to glorify God by trusting him.

**INTRODUCTION:** Have you ever seen a ridiculous church sign? I saw one once that said “Stop, drop, and roll won’t work in Hell.” I saw another that said, “Need a Lifeguard? Ours walks on water.” Now for people who know your church, they may chuckle or understand. But what about people who know nothing about you or church in general? Wouldn’t it be wiser to let everyone know what the church is about, our mission statement so to speak? Jesus’ mission was clear. He lived his life to glorify God.

## UNPACKING THE GOSPEL IN THE BIBLE:

**Read** John 12:36-41

1. Why did some of the people not believe in Jesus?

The simple answer is that they had blind eyes and hard hearts. Isaiah’s words can sound somewhat disturbing at first glance. It sounds like he said God made them not believe and then punished them for not believing. However, if you look at the larger story of the Bible, God constantly challenged Israel’s unbelief and they constantly rebelled. As a result of their persistence, God gave some in Israel over to their unbelief because they had continued in it. He simply allowed them to go the way they insisted on going. They would not believe, and therefore, they could not believe.

**Read** John 12:42-43

2. What does it mean that the people who did believe liked the glory of others more than the glory that comes from God?

Some of the people who did believe in Jesus were afraid to make a public profession of faith because of the larger unbelieving community. In this case the word glory is probably closely related with honor. They would rather

have people honor them than to have God honor them. This reflects a serious misunderstanding of God's authority and place in their lives. It also shows how fear can rob someone of the joy of glorifying God by living publically for him.

Read John 12: 44-50

3. What is the commandment that God the Father gave to Jesus?

He was to speak about eternal life and provide light to the people so they could believe and be redeemed. This brought great glory to God because it revealed his mercy toward people who deserved nothing but wrath.

#### UNDERSTANDING HOW THE GOSPEL APPLIES TO MY LIFE:

4. How do we move from living in fear to living constant lives for God's glory?

Fear or worry is nothing more than functional unbelief. When we are constantly being conquered by fear in whatever form it may take, we are denying the role that God plays in our lives. Fear causes us to attempt to take control of areas of our life that we cannot control. We may think to ourselves, "If I am not that public about my faith in Jesus, then my chances of being liked by others and getting a higher position at work are more possible." It is not healthy for us to attempt to control what others think of us. This is but one example of how fear can manifest itself in someone's life. We are delivered from fear when we see that Jesus came to die for us and be raised for us. In other words, God is for you. He desires for you to know and trust him. This brings peace and alleviates fear. Letting Christ define your worth instead of fear places Christ in his rightful place as the Lord of your life.

#### LIVING OUT THE GOSPEL IN MY EVERYDAY LIFE:

5. So how do you practically live *from* what is most important *for* what is most important? How do you make consistent faithful choices?

Fight to believe that Jesus is more valuable to you than anything else. He is your King! Know that because of Jesus, you have peace with God and he is working all things out for your good (Rom. 8:28) Pray for God to give you a heart set on him. Spend time reading his word so you will think like him.