

242 Guide - Small Group Discussion Guide

This weekly guide has been created as a tool to help you study individually and/or in a small group and live what you are learning from the Bible and weekend services here at RiverGlen.

In Acts 2:42 we are told that the people in the first church were living out what they were learning from the apostles' teaching. **The purpose of this guide is to equip you to put into practice what you learn.**



Week 4: Finding People

Big Idea: “Losing my religion leads to me see people through God’s eyes.”

This is our last week of a 4 week journey through the book Colossians. Entitled “Losing My Religion” we are learning how to lose religion and embrace a relationship with Jesus. Colossians was written by Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome to confront and encourage the Colossians. Apparently the young church was mixing Christianity and other religions and trying to do things to get right with God. Paul teaches that Jesus Christ alone is supreme and sufficient. Jesus, not religion, is our bridge to God and what gives us eternal hope and comfort.

Ice Breaker: Look at the following photos. What do you think is the story behind each of these images?



BACKGROUND CHARACTERS When you watch a movie, do you ever pay attention to the people in the background? Or have you ever wondered about all those guys who were killed by the Terminator and how their families felt? Probably not. But think about this question. When you are out in public, do you pay attention to the people in the “background?” Admittedly, it is easy for us to think of ourselves as the stars of our own dramas, and all others are supporting cast or extras. That makes it tough for us to notice those around us. Besides friends and family, we interact with lots of people each day: cashiers, bus drivers, servers, bank tellers, traffic commuters, neighbors, etc. Often we interact with these people without ever exchanging a word or looking them in the eye. And when we do notice people, it is easy to notice them on a shallow level. **For example:** Are they attractive? Are they wearing an ugly outfit? Do they look rich? Do they look poor? **But it is harder to ask the following questions:** *What are they really like? What do they experience on a daily basis? Do they have a good life? What is their story?*

1. Share about a time when you completely misjudged someone based on how they looked or acted?
2. What are some ways that we ignore people around us?

OBLIVIOUS OR OBVIOUS LOVE At the turn of 2008, the world's population was estimated to be 6.7 billion people. Imagine what it would be like to pay close attention to that many people. Yet, Jesus poetically reminds his followers that God cares for us so much that he even knows the count of hair on our heads. God notices everyone.

Read Deuteronomy 10:17-18

Orphans, widows, and foreigners were among the most ignored people in Biblical times. Yet God especially noticed them. If the Bible says that humans are created in God's image, then we are supposed to treat all people the way God would treat them. We may know what it is like to be unnoticed; it hurts living around other human beings and feeling like no one even cares about you. That is why noticing others is the first act of showing God's love. John 13:35 states that the defining characteristic of a Christ follower is love for others. This love must be obvious. As Christian author and speaker Tony Evans writes, *"If people have to read your mind to know that you love them, they will never really know if they have been loved. Invisible love is no love at all."* Christian theologian Francis Schaeffer adds, *"If we do not show love to one another, the world has a right to question whether Christianity is true."*

3. How would you describe your vision for noticing others and loving them?

- a. **Black Eye.** I have helped others, but people have taken advantage of me.
- b. **Clinically Blind.** I'm oblivious of opportunities to love others.
- c. **Glare from the sun.** I get too distracted to help people.
- d. **20-20.** I clearly see hurting people and I show love to them.
- e. **Squinty.** I see opportunities to love others, but I don't know what to do.
- f. **Sunglasses.** Honestly, I purposely look away from loving people.
- g. **Other:** _____.

4. Who are the "orphans, widows, and foreigners" in our society that we tend to ignore? What about in your life?

Read Colossians 4:2-4

GOD'S EYE VIEW Prayer is our most direct form of communication with God. As Richard Foster describes it, it "is the central avenue God uses to transform us." It draws us close to the heartbeat of God and helps us see the world from his eyes.

5. What is one specific way you can begin to have a God's eye view this week?

6. Take a moment to write down some names to pray for this week specifically as follows: Who can you pray for in your family? Who can you pray for at work or school? Who can you pray for in your neighborhood?

Reflection & Prayer Lord God we come before you asking for your help in developing a God's eye view of people we meet this week. Provide us with opportunities to point them to You or to help them experience You in a new way. Lord we can only do this through Your Word and by Your Spirit so come and meet as we prepare our hearts with the following study of scripture. In Your Name, Amen.

Leviticus 25:8-55

Deuteronomy 15: 1-11; 24:19-22

Psalms 82

Matthew 5:1-12; 20:20-28; 25: 31-46

Mark 10:17-31

Luke 6:27-42; 7:36-50

John 8:1-11

James 2:1-25