

LIFE group Leader Handout

January 6, 2019

Message: It's Day--Seizing Opportunities that Bring Glory to God

Pastor Michael O'Connor

Scripture--John 9:1-7

1 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

Main Idea--Like Jesus, I Must Do the Works of God While It Is Day

Needs--opportunities that bring glory to God

Times

Jesus: We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. John 9:4

Outcomes

A physical miracle can be on the way to a spiritual rebirth.

What "God-prepared works" look like:

We must work the works of him who sent me... (John 9:4)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:8-10

- They bring God glory (see v. 3)
- They seem a lot like work--*the title contains the word "work"*
- They include the everyday
- They also include "Gap Works"

Application--

- What was my primary "take away" from this message?
- If make a New Year's resolution from this message, what would it be?
- What "gaps" between the will of God and what I observe in my world has God been impressing on me? What have I started to do about it?

7 New Year's Resolutions for Small-Group Leaders

By David Fisher

I don't do New Year's resolutions. Why bother, when you either think you're perfect already or that you'll fail by March? That said, I'm going to give it the old college try. However, this isn't about **you** getting in shape or staying healthy, but your small group. If there's power in numbers, maybe small group resolutions are attainable. And if you're perfect already, you know everyone in your small group isn't, so read on!

I've been involved in small group ministry for about 15 years. I've led them, attended them and run from them. Many times, people attend small groups out of religious duty or because they feel it's what they're supposed to do to be more spiritual. But even more times, they are really trying to make it work because they long for more connection than a few minutes during the church worship service. So here's my resolution list as small group leader:

1. I will be real. No one likes a phony even when it's not intended. If you had a bad week, it's OK as a leader to tell people you had a bad week. You don't have to divulge all your skeletons at the first potluck, but it's good to be honest. If you are, others feel free to let down their guard, too. This is how friendships move beyond the surface, and people begin to enjoy spending time together.

2. I will be messy. From being real comes messy. There might be tears. That's OK. God created us out of dirt (messy), Jesus was born in a manger (messy), and from Jesus being a carpenter to putting mud in the eyes of a blind man, to dying in the way he did, it seems that God likes "messy."

3. I will put my small group in position to create *communitas*. From sociologist Victor Turner, who coined the word: "*Communitas* is an intense community, the feeling of great social equality, solidarity and togetherness." Here's the tricky thing: We can't manufacture this. Remember the youth group trip when the bus broke down and you all had to push the bus to the nearest off-ramp? We can't deliberately break the bus (well, we *could*, but ...). We *can* take risks with our small groups. Put them in position to create those kinds of moments. Your small group doesn't have to go to China, but it *could* raise money to send Bibles to China. You don't have to play in the NFL, but how about doing a high-ropes course together then discussing how your relationships have grown through that experience?

4. I will not settle for being just a social group. *Communitas* in the kingdom of God needs to be outwardly focused. God expands his kingdom on earth by using his body—you and me. That doesn't mean do only outreach; it does mean that as you build intense community, you are always reaching out. Maybe someone has a brother who needs to connect—invite him in. Maybe you go out to eat and tip more than the meal. Maybe you find a homeless man and not just give money, but sit and talk awhile. This doesn't have to be every week or even during your meeting time, but these occurrences should be a regular part of your small group's life.

5. I will be open to new ideas and not be afraid to ask questions. Don't just ask questions so you can give the group the answer. Ask questions you *don't* know the answers to. Ask about something you're struggling with. Make people think about what they believe and why. Let people wrestle. God is bigger than any questions or doubts that arise in your group.

6. I will not force it. Fun is not fun when it's forced. If your group doesn't do goofy icebreakers, don't do them. Find things your group likes and do *them*. But don't be afraid to experiment. A couple of Sundays back, we had a makeshift prayer path set up for service; some people thought it was lame until they did it and loved it and now want to do it again (*Whew!*). Chances are, your group is together because of some common interests. Be who you are. It's like *communitas*—you can't manufacture fun, but you can put your group in position to have fun.

7. I will have a kingdom cause. If you get together for fun to watch a sci-fi movie, go for it! But do more. Be missional. Find others outside the church who like sci-fi, and invite *them* to come and talk about it. Camping, rebuilding cars, poetry - whatever the interest, all are begging for outreach to happen. Do something you love together, **and** expand the kingdom through building relationships with others who are unchurched, quit going to church or attend another church.