

# SCRIPTURE CARD GUIDE FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

"IGNORE YOUR COMMUNITY" JUNE 25 & 26

## SERIES OVERVIEW: "7 EASY WAYS TO DERAIL THE CHURCH"

In the U.S. more churches are closing than opening. As the church, we need to recognize what causes this trend. While some might point to a changing culture, a deeper look into the churches that closed reveals several common denominators. In this series, we distill points from Thom Rainer's book, "Autopsy of a Deceased Church" to reveal seven main factors that lead to a church declining, and ultimately dying. Looking at how the church of Acts avoided these pitfalls, we better understand, not only why the early church grew, but how the church today, can avoid these traps and continue our mission of more people experiencing the power of the Gospel.

*Follow the directions below for a guided group discussion with a friend, in a family, small group, etc.  
Grab a Scripture Card (printed or electronic) and simply follow steps from 1 to 6 on this page and the next.*

1

### OPENING PRAYER AND SCRIPTURE:

*About 5 minutes*

Ask a volunteer to open in prayer.

2

### BIG IDEA:

*A minute to read*

In our culture, the church has become more of a country club for the righteous rather than a place where all are welcome. We think people need to look, sound, and act like us in order to be part of the body of Christ. However, we are challenged along with the church of Acts to heed the words of Paul and Barnabas who remind us that the Gospel is indeed for all people, even those people who we tend to exclude.



**June 25 & 26, 2022**

For the Lord gave us this command when he said, "I have made you a light to the Gentiles, to bring salvation to the farthest corners of the earth." - Acts 13:47 NLT

### Reflect

**Read the full passage in your Bible - Acts 13:44-52**

What word or phrase is the Holy Spirit highlighting from the scripture reading?

What might be God's invitation to you in this?

What might be God's challenge to you in this?

How might God be calling you to respond?  
Be curious...and then do it.



### DISCUSSION HELP:

Use follow-up questions to take the discussion deeper. Guide answers to be honest and real.

**Can you say more about that?**

**How have you seen that play out in your life?**

**What does that stir up in you?**

**Has anyone else had a similar thought or experience?**

**What might God be inviting you to do?**

3

### INTRO QUESTION:

*About 10 minutes*

Have you felt like an outsider in a particular location or situation in the past? Describe what it felt like and what things caused confusion for you? Did anyone help you feel more welcome? What did they do?

4

### SCRIPTURE READING + GROUP DISCUSSION

*About 40-45 minutes*

In verse 45, why do you think the Jews were jealous? What else do you learn about the Jews in this passage? Our sinful nature can tempt us toward these same thoughts and actions perhaps without even noticing it. What helps you align your heart for people with God's heart for people?

What do you learn about Paul and the disciples in this passage?

Read also Deuteronomy 10:12-19 and Isaiah 49:6. What do you learn about God from these three passages?

Share a story from the past month how God used you to be His salt and light to the world?

As a result of today's reading and discussion, how might God be calling you to respond?

For extra credit this week: Read all of Acts 13 as Paul shares the Word of God with Jews and Gentiles. Reflect on what stands out to you and why?

## 5 CLOSING GROUP PRAYER:

About 10 minutes

Ask each person in the group to select one of the following to pray for now and in the week's ahead: all people on their street, all people in their neighborhood, all people in their town/city, all people in MN, all people in the U.S., all people in Asia, all people in Africa, all people in Europe, all people in the Middle East, all people in North America, all people in South America, all people in Australia, as well as any other specific areas on the group's heart. The leader or apprentice will open with a circle prayer allowing each group member to offer up prayers for their specific area of the world chosen.

# TAKE IT DEEPER



### Pray

Take a moment to be still in God's presence...(after a moment) offer this prayer: "Lord Jesus, I'm here to connect with you, to just be with you as your child."

Invite God to give you a new or renewed passion for all people to come to know Jesus.

Thank God that the Gospel message is reaching people in every corner of the earth.

### Live It Out

*Oftentimes, we can exclude certain groups of people when thinking about who the Gospel is for. This could be a certain person, race, sin, etc. Who is that for you? Who do you struggle to welcome with the good news of Jesus? Meditate on Acts 13:47 this week and pray for that person/people group (that came to your mind). Pray that God would reach them with His love and that your heart would be softened to view them the same way Jesus does. Ask God to show you an action step and follow his leading.*

## 6

### LIVE IT OUT:

About 5 minutes

Read the "Live It Out" section and invite the group to take the steps noted.