

# SCRIPTURE CARD GUIDE FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

"FIND YOUR IDENTITY IN POLITICS" JULY 02 & 03

## 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 2 minutes*

Ask a volunteer to open in prayer. Pray Eph 4:1-6 as part of the opening prayer for each other and for the Church overall.

2

### BIG IDEA:

*A minute to read*

Politics is one of the top things bringing division among relationships in our culture today. People tend to either find their identity in their political platform, or they tend to revolt against any political and governmental authorities. Yet, is there another way? Jesus calls us into a life where our ultimate identity is found in him, and because of that, we can engage in politics with our identity as followers of Jesus influencing every decision that we make.

3

### INTRO QUESTION:

*About 5 minutes*

Think of Jesus followers around the world with whom we share a common bond of faith and love. How does this common bond change how you see differences in language, dress, culture, food, etc.?



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But Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than any human authority."  
- Acts 5:29 NLT

### Reflect

**Read the full passage in your Bible - Acts 5:17-32**

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.

4

### SCRIPTURE READING + GROUP DISCUSSION

*About 40-45 minutes*

Read Acts 5:17-42. There are different groups in this passage. How does it describe the feelings and reactions of the: Sadducees, Temple guards, Sanhedrin/High Council, and the Pharisees?

What are the actions and feelings of the apostles? What common purpose did the apostles share? (see v 42)

Read Matt 22:15-22, 37-39. What is God's and what is Caesar's? What are the implications of this in your life? What does it look like to find your identity in Jesus above all else?

See Eph 4:1-6 and Phil 2:1-11 How do these passages give us guidance to the way in which we live out our common purpose as Jesus followers today?

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



### 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?**

## 5 CLOSING GROUP PRAYER:

About 15 minutes

Share prayer requests and pray in a circle prayer for the person on your left. The leader or apprentice may end the time of prayer with the following:

*"Dear Jesus, thank you for taking on the the very nature of a servant, and being obedient even to death on a cross. Help us to do nothing out of self ambition or vain conceit, but in humility, to look not only to our own interests, but also to the needs of others. Help us to bear with one another in love and make every effort to keep the unity of one body, one Spirit, one Lord, and one God and Father of all. Forgive us for times we don't love you with our whole heart, soul, and mind and when we prioritize other things before You. Help us to find our identity in You, to live in Your ways, and for Your purposes, in this time and place for Your glory. Amen."*

# 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 show you if there is any area of your life in which you are looking for identity outside of his love and being his child.

Thank God that he sent Jesus to show us a better way, the way of love.

## Live It Out

*Start with prayer, asking God to show you where politics have created division and stress in your relationships. Read Ephesians 4:3-4 each day this week. How might God be leading you to "make every effort to create peace" in a specific relationship? Trust God that, as you pray, he will change you and lead you, and then reach out to that person, pursuing deep unity and love that is found in Christ.*

## 6

## LIVE IT OUT:

About 2 minutes

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