

2026-01-18 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide: Keeping Your Head in the Game

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Begin by asking God to speak to hearts and give boldness to apply His Word this week.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: Have you ever been part of a team (sports, work, ministry) where you had to push through adversity to achieve something? What kept you going?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

Jesus never tempted people to follow Him - He told them the cost would be high

Changed people change people - Authentic transformation attracts others to Christ

We must obey God rather than people - Boldness comes from prioritizing God's commands

Victory isn't measured by earthly success - Heaven is where rewards are given

Don't lose heart when it looks like you're behind - Keep your focus on Christ, not circumstances

Discussion Questions

Section 1: The Cost of Following Jesus (15 minutes)

Read Acts 4:27-31

The early church prayed for "mega boldness" to speak God's word. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current boldness in speaking about Jesus? What holds you back?

The sermon mentioned that Jesus never tempted people to follow Him but told them the cost. Why do you think modern Christianity sometimes

downplays the cost of discipleship?

Share a time when following Christ cost you something (a relationship, opportunity, comfort, etc.). Looking back, do you have any regrets?

Section 2: The Holy Spirit and Obedience (15 minutes)

Read Acts 5:29-32

Peter said, "We must obey God rather than men." The sermon asked: "What would happen if we were just stupid enough to take God at His word?" Discuss what might change in your life if you simply obeyed what Scripture clearly says without overthinking it.

Acts 5:32 says God gives the Holy Spirit "to those who obey Him." How does obedience relate to experiencing the Holy Spirit's power in our lives?

The sermon challenged us to ask: "Is there anything in my life that you can tell is of God? Is there anything that is just me?" Take turns honestly answering this about your own life.

Section 3: Rejoicing in Persecution (15 minutes)

Read Acts 5:40-42

The apostles left their flogging "rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name." How does this challenge our typical response to difficulty or opposition?

The sermon stated: "We think heaven works when God blesses us and it's all going our way." How does this perspective differ from what Scripture teaches about suffering and reward?

Paul knew hardship awaited him everywhere he went, yet he said, "I'm still going." What situations in your life require this kind of "I'm still going" determination right now?

Section 4: Keeping Your Head in the Game (10 minutes)

The sermon used the football analogy of keeping your head in the game. What are the biggest distractions that cause you to "lose heart" or take your focus off Christ?

The pastor asked: "Do you have a bold enough presence and Christ's presence in your life that people know you're a Christian?" Would your coworkers, neighbors, or family members say Christianity defines you? Why or why not?

Personal Reflection (5 minutes)

Take a moment of silence for each person to consider:

One area where I need to be more obedient to God this week

One person I need to boldly share Christ with

One circumstance where I need to "not lose heart"

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge: Choose ONE

Option 1: The Boldness Challenge Pray daily for "mega boldness" like the early church. Commit to having at least one spiritual conversation with someone outside your church this week. Share the result with the group next time.

Option 2: The Obedience Audit Identify one clear biblical command you've been avoiding or rationalizing away. Write it down. Share it with an accountability partner in the group. Take one concrete step of obedience this week.

Option 3: The Rejoicing Practice When something difficult happens this week, immediately practice rejoicing. Thank God that He's still God regardless of circumstances. Journal about the experience and share with the group.

Option 4: The Spouse/Friend Interview Have the conversation suggested in the sermon: Ask someone close to you, "What do you see in my life that's clearly from God? What do you see that's just me?" Listen without defending yourself.

Group Accountability

Pair up with one other person from the group:

Exchange contact information

Commit to checking in mid-week about your chosen challenge

Pray for each other specifically regarding boldness and obedience

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Go around the circle and have each person complete this sentence prayer:

"God, this week I need Your help to..."

Close with a group prayer for boldness, asking God to help each person keep their head in the game and not lose heart.

Additional Resources

Scripture for further study: Acts 4-5 (entire chapters), 2 Corinthians 4-6, Acts 21

Reflection question for the week: "Am I living in a way that would make someone ask, 'What's different about you?'"

Memory verse: Acts 5:29 - "We must obey God rather than human beings!"

Preparation for Next Week

Read the next sermon or assigned scripture passage before your group meets again. Come ready to share how God worked through your obedience this week.