

Week 4 | Go and Be Discussion Guide



How to Use This Discussion Guide

• Use the questions in each section below as a springboard for discussion. Do not feel like you have to follow the study guide religiously or hit every question. Sometimes you will only need 1 or 2 questions in a section. These questions are designed to help spark discussion. Refer to them as needed. Your goal is to get to the Application Questions. We want to make sure we are responding to the truths of God for us.

BACKGROUND FOR THE LEADER: Thank you for helping connect people in Authentic Relationships!

Today's passages from James 2:14-29 and Ephesians 2:8-10 are powerful and clear in defining what the Lord has designed for us to be. To Go and Be the Church.

In eternity past God prepared ahead of time that His redeemed people would do these good works as evidence of His grace. Here is His power not only in giving us new life but also in helping us to walk in good works throughout this life and into eternity. We cannot do anything to earn salvation. Yet God means for us who have received salvation to produce good works. If we have been given new life, raised with Christ, and seated with Him, we will certainly do good works as evidence that we have received this great salvation.

Prospective drivers of automobiles and trucks must pass a written test on road rules and a skill test on the road. Lawyers must pass the bar examination, and accountants must pass the CPA exam. Students in all institutions must show their knowledge on examinations. It is only reasonable to realize that our profession of Christianity demands a test. That test is the production of works. Without works to demonstrate faith our claim becomes false and dead.

It's too often typical for us humans to suppose that our actions can help earn our eternal life. Paul wrote Ephesians 2:8-9 to help us

know that this is never true. But then he went on to explain the role that good works have in the life of those who are saved. Trusting wholly in God's provision is the opposite of trusting in one's own contribution to salvation.

The whole of our redemption—past, present, and future—is God's gift, by His initiative. Neither religious rituals, nor great kindness to others, nor living morally counts as anything in terms of meriting God's salvation. For this reason, no one can boast about a personal contribution to salvation. Heaven will be filled with the praises of Christ's glory and His works. No human display of works can compare to the riches of God's grace toward those who once were dead in their sins but now are alive with Christ.

Ephesians 2:10 helps us understand that one of the goals of salvation for us is the fruit of Christlike character and of good deeds. Grace can be compared to the power grid that extends to someone's house; faith is having the switch turned on to connect with the power; and good works are like all the helpful equipment that springs to life when connected to the power supply with the switch turned on. Christians should show works of love to prove their faith is real and to live out God's calling, equipping and gifting in their lives.

Connection

1. Has there been a situation in your life where you did not act and you wish you had? What happened?
2. On the times you don't act, what typically keeps you from it?
3. What speaks louder—a person's actions or words? Explain your answer.

Engage God's Word - Read [James 2:14-24](#); [Ephesians 2:8-10](#) as a group.

Discussion:

1. What do the questions in verse James 2:14 imply about faith without works?
 2. What, according to James, are some actions that coincide with genuine faith?
 3. What does James mean by faith that is dead in verse 17 (see also verse 14)?
 4. In what way should the lifestyle of a Christian verify his or her faith?
 5. How might James' words in verse 14 and 17 cause conflict in the hearts of some who profess to be Christians?
 6. Do you think James was meaning to cause people to doubt their salvation here? What was his intent?
 7. Ephesians 2:10 follows Paul's description of our salvation. What is the connection between grace and works?
 8. How does it make you feel to know that God has already prepared situations for you to do good works?
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Application Questions:

1. Dave shared Sunday that: **We are not called to be consumers but contributors.** - What does this statement bring to mind for you? How does it relate to your story?
 2. Name one new way you know you need to put faith into practice.
 3. If faith in your heart is evident in the fruit of your life, then what is your faith like right now?
 4. Considering what you know about your gifts and the works God has prepared in advance for you to do, are there any roles you feel you could do a better job of fulfilling as a part of our body?
 5. What is one of the reasons God created you?
 6. Dave briefly reviewed spiritual gifts on Sunday well. If you have time, you may want to discuss and discover more about the spiritual gifts in your group. Or, you may want to save this for another day - even set-up an additional meeting time to dive into this topic. Dave explained that there are 3 main categories (if you will) of spiritual gifts:
 - a. Equipping in Calling - Ephesians 4:11-12
 - b. Empowered in Spirit - 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
 - c. Engaging in Serving - Romans 12:3-8
 7. How does it make you feel to know that the Holy Spirit of God has gifted you with at least one spiritual gift?
 8. What spiritual gift or gifts do you think God has given you?
 9. What fruit or spiritual gifts have you noticed in your life? What fruit and spiritual gifts have others noticed or mentioned or confirmed in your life?
 10. What are some ways we can, together, serve in a way that pleases God without being asked by someone?
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Pray for It and Apply It:

- Who can your group pray for that is in need or hurting? After praying, have someone reach out to check on them and see what practical steps can be taken to bring encouragement, help, and love to that family. Could you invite them to join your small group? Or help them connect (or create) to another small group? (If this happens, please let pastor Doug know: groups@northland.cc)