

THE BUILD & DEFEND SERIES

BUILDING IN BABYLON

A SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Introduction

In a world where secularism seems to be on the rise and the values of faith face increasing challenges, the task of building disciples and sharing the message of Jesus Christ becomes more critical than ever. The early believers in the Apostolic era faced their own set of challenges but remained steadfast in their commitment to the doctrine of the Apostles. Today, we draw inspiration and guidance from their unwavering faith as we seek to evangelize and disciple in a secular era.

This small group Bible study series, based on the insights of Evangelist Ismael and Sister Sarahi Montoya, explores three key challenges that impact us all in the process of disciple-making:

- **Session 1: The Power of Pre-Evangelism** - Discover the importance of building relationships and creating safe spaces for spiritual conversations.
- **Session 2: Careful Cultural Exegesis** - Learn how to navigate cultural differences respectfully, fostering collaboration with diverse perspectives.
- **Session 3: The Sin Underneath the Sin** - Address the root causes of sin in our lives and guide others toward transformation through God's love.
- **Session 4: Building Meaningful Relationships** - Explore practical ways to build deeper connections with people, leading to meaningful faith discussions.
- **Session 5: The Ultimate Reward** - Reflect on the rewards of patience and perseverance in discipleship, shaping the kind of disciples God raises within our communities.

As we embark on this small group Bible study journey, may we be equipped with the tools and insights to engage thoughtfully and empathetically with the world around us.

Our mission is not to retreat from our beliefs but to make a profound difference in a secular age, sharing the message of Jesus Christ with a world in need of His hope and salvation. Let's begin our exploration of these vital topics and prepare to make a lasting impact in our changing world.

Session 1: The Power of Pre-Evangelism

Key Verse: Ephesians 6:12 - "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Ice Breaker: Share a time when you felt nervous or hesitant about sharing your faith with someone.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction (5 minutes):

- As a group, read the section "The Power of 'Pre-Evangelism'" from the article "Building in Babylon" available at MOPmag.com.

Bible Study (10 minutes):

- Read and discuss the passage from Ephesians 6:12.
- Explore what this verse tells us about the challenges we may face when sharing our faith.

Discussion Questions (15 minutes):

1. How does the concept of spiritual warfare described in Ephesians 6:12 relate to our experiences in evangelism?
2. Share a personal story where building a relationship with someone helped open the door to discussing your faith.
3. What are some practical ways to build relationships and create a safe space for spiritual conversations?

Application (5 minutes):

- Encourage each participant to identify one person they would like to build a pre-evangelistic relationship with.

Take Action: Reach out to the person you identified, start a conversation, and make an effort to build a relationship over the next week. Be open to discussing spiritual matters when the time feels right.

Session 2: Careful Cultural Exegesis

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 9:22b - "...I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some."

Ice Breaker: Share a cultural experience or tradition from your own background that you cherish.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction (5 minutes):

- As a group, read the section "Careful Cultural Exegesis" from the article "Building in Babylon" available at MOPmag.com.

Bible Study (10 minutes):

- Read and discuss the passage from 1 Corinthians 9:22b.
- Explore how the apostle Paul's approach to different cultures can inform our own interactions.

Discussion Questions (15 minutes):

1. Share a time when cultural differences posed a challenge in sharing your faith or understanding someone else's perspective.
2. Why is it important to be sensitive to and respectful of other cultures in our efforts to make disciples?
3. How can we embrace diversity and collaborate with others, even when we don't agree on everything?

Application (5 minutes):

- Encourage each participant to learn something new about a culture different from their own over the next week.

Take Action: Share what you've learned about the new culture with your small group in the next session, and discuss how this knowledge can inform your approach to evangelism.

Session 3: The Sin Underneath the Sin

Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:17 - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

Ice Breaker: Share a personal experience where you felt God's transformative power in your life.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction (5 minutes):

- As a group, read the section "The Sin Underneath the Sin" from the article "Building in Babylon" available at MOPmag.com.

Bible Study (10 minutes):

- Read and discuss the passage from 2 Corinthians 5:17.
- Explore the concept of replacing old affections with new ones through Christ.

Discussion Questions (15 minutes):

1. Share a story where you witnessed someone's life transformed by the love of Jesus.
2. Why is it important to address the root causes of sin rather than just its outward manifestations?
3. How can we help others recognize and heal the foundational sins in their hearts?

Application (5 minutes):

- Encourage each participant to spend time in prayer, asking God to reveal any underlying sins in their own hearts that need His transformative power.

Take Action:

- Reflect on your prayer time and journal any insights or revelations you receive about underlying sins. Share your reflections in the next session.

Session 4: Building Meaningful Relationships

Key Verse: 1 Peter 3:15 - "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

Ice Breaker: Share a memorable experience of building a meaningful relationship with someone who had a different perspective or background.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction (5 minutes):

- As a group, read the section "Building Meaningful Relationships" from the article "Building in Babylon" available at MOPmag.com.

Bible Study (10 minutes):

- Read and discuss the passage from 1 Peter 3:15.
- Explore how gentleness and respect play a role in effective evangelism.

Discussion Questions (15 minutes):

1. Share a time when you successfully built a relationship with someone from a different faith or background. What made it successful?
2. How can we maintain enthusiasm and motivation in our efforts to build relationships for evangelism, even when results are not immediate?
3. What are some practical ways to be prepared to give a reason for the hope we have, as mentioned in 1 Peter 3:15?

Application (5 minutes):

- Encourage each participant to identify one person in their life whom they would like to build a deeper relationship with for the purpose of sharing their faith.

Take Action: Take a specific action in your relationship-building efforts over the next week, such as inviting the person identified for coffee or initiating a meaningful conversation. Share your experiences in the next session.

Session 5: The Ultimate Reward

Key Verse: Galatians 6:9 - "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Ice Breaker: Share a personal experience where you faced challenges but didn't give up on doing something good.

Lesson Outline:

Introduction (5 minutes):

- As a group, read the section "The Ultimate Reward" from the article "Building in Babylon" available at MOPmag.com.

Bible Study (10 minutes):

- Read and discuss the passage from Galatians 6:9.
- Explore how this verse applies to our efforts in building relationships and making disciples.

Discussion Questions (15 minutes):

1. Share a story from the article or your own experience where patience and perseverance in evangelism led to significant results.
2. Discuss the potential challenges of expecting instant conversions and the importance of long-term investment in relationships and discipleship.
3. How can we maintain enthusiasm and motivation in our evangelism and discipleship efforts, even when we don't see immediate results?

Application (5 minutes):

- Encourage each participant to reflect on their own journey and identify areas where they may have felt weary or discouraged.

Take Action: Spend time in prayer, asking God for renewed enthusiasm and strength in your evangelism and discipleship efforts. Share your reflections in the next session.