

Sermon Based Small Group Guide  
For November 8, 2020 sermon:

***Empowered (Book of Acts): "When 'religious' people attack"***

**Warm up:** (Questions for discussion)

- What is God doing (in my life/family)?
- How am I doing?
- Where am I growing?
- What might be my next steps of faith?

**Digging deeper:** (20-30 minutes)

1. It is so easy for us to "romanticize" people and events that happened a long time ago. We imagine the excitement of the "wild west", when it was actually dangerously lawless. We have get caught up in the sense of adventure of being an American pioneer, when it was truly harsh and unpredictable. Early Christianity was not for the faint of heart! To follow Jesus was to put yourself in conflict with the secular and religious authorities of the day. Let's be reminded WHERE their courage came from:

Acts 4:7-9

Acts 4:31

Acts 13:6-12

Discuss the difference between "me trying to be brave" and "God giving me boldness".

2. "Enjoying" suffering is wrong...it is a mental condition. Yet we are told that suffering should be expected in the Christian life, and that suffering for the right reasons is actually a sign of God's approval on our spiritual maturity. Read the following passages and talk about WHY we suffer and HOW we should view suffering:

Romans 5:3-5

Hebrews 5:7-8

James 1:2-4

1 Peter 1:6-7

3. One of the things that really stands out in the story of the early church is that they cared SO much more what God thought or said about something than what anybody else thought/said. This got them into trouble with the Roman government and with their unbelieving Jewish religious leaders. What does the Bible say that gives us clarity and courage when we are tempted to "shrink back" and even disobey God?

Matthew 10:28

Isaiah 41:10

Proverbs 29:25

Hebrews 13:6

Psalms 56:3-4

Psalms 118:6-9

**Apply it:** (10 minutes)

When your group meets to do this study, the presidential election may or may not be decided...and may or may not be decided in the way you hoped and prayed. This is no time to fight, to name call, or to lose hope. This is a time for faith and steadfast confidence in the power and purposes of God! Read Philippians 4:6-7 together and claim those truths as you close your time in prayer.