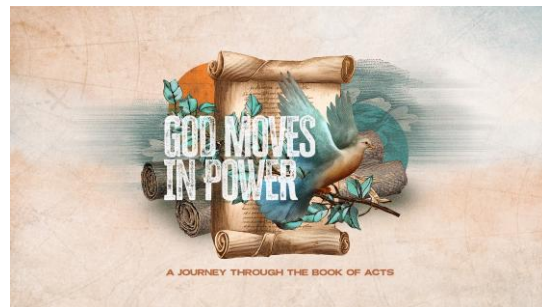


Group Discussion Guide | October 22 & 25

God Moves in Power through Ordinary People

Created to Serve Group Guide Leader Instructions



During this portion of our Acts sermon series, we are examining how God moves in power through *ordinary people*—you and me. But many find themselves wondering what we have to offer, if anything. Scripture makes clear that God grants believers spiritual gifts, life experiences, and unique callings. When we discover who He has made us to be and fulfill the purpose He created for us, we experience deep joy and *others* are blessed. The question is, how do we discover what God has for us?

Over the next three weeks, your life group will adjust its normal Bible Lab and sermon discussion rhythms to engage with *Created to Serve*, an interactive experience designed to help people discover **who God has created them to be** and **how He is inviting them to partner with Him**.

While *Created to Serve* is designed for people to engage with on their own, the encounter will be enriched and reinforced when experienced in a life group community. You can encourage each other as you share what you're learning and noticing and affirm the gifts and passions you see in each other. When someone experiences confusion, others can provide clarity. When someone experiences discouragement, others can affirm. After all, we are given gifts by God so that we can function together as a *body*, not separate parts!

Created to Serve invites people to explore:

- God's character and heart
- Spiritual gifts
- Passions and causes
- Abilities
- Preferred contexts
- Experiences

When you meet together, each person will have time to interact with some sections of the material *on their own* alongside your group discussion and reflection.

In addition, people will be encouraged to spend time with *Created to Serve* outside of life group time, bringing their discoveries to your next life group meeting.

Here's the way the *Created to Serve* content will be broken down:

Week 1 (Week of October 25)

During your group time: "Introduction" and "Explore God's Heart and Character" sections of *Created to Serve*

Before your next gathering: “Explore Spiritual Gifts,” “Explore Passions and Causes,” and “Explore Your Abilities”

Week 2 (Week of November 1)

During your group time: “Explore Your Preferred Contexts”

Before your next gathering: “Explore Your Experiences,” “Discovering the Bigger Picture”

Note: The week of November 8 will resume sermon content discussion in an abbreviated form to allow for discussion of these two final sections, and future life group guides will provide opportunities for further reflection on the Created to Serve materials.

How can you prepare as a leader?

- Spend time with *Created to Serve* and the discussion guide before you gather as a group so you are familiar with its contents.
- Engage with the materials for yourself—we would love for you to experience *Created to Serve* as a participant, not just a leader.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to affirm, equip, and encourage each person in your group.
- Plan your time. We’ve provided approximate times for each section. But you may wish to allot more than your group’s normal discussion time if possible. If pressed for time, you may choose to skip items marked “optional.”
- Be ready to go first. When it’s time to share, offer your own response before inviting others. Your openness sets the tone for the group.
- Welcome everyone. Some in your group may be new to faith or unsure where they stand with God. Let people know that “I’m not sure yet” is always a good answer and that no one has to share more than they’re comfortable with.

What if...? Guidance for situations that may come up

- **Someone’s view of God is harsh, distant, or angry.** Don’t debate. Ask a gentle question like “What has shaped how you see God?” and point to Exodus 34:6-7, which describes the God this guide invites us to explore. The Tozer quote may stir this up, so be ready for it.
- **A characteristic of God is painful or hard to embrace.** Words like “Father,” “Faithful,” or “Wrathful against Evil” may land differently for people who have been hurt or are suffering or are caught in the throes of sin. Remind the group that the exercise isn’t about what *should* resonate. Someone may name a characteristic they long to believe but struggle to feel, and that is a worthy answer.
- **Someone can’t narrow their choices, or nothing resonates with them.** Reassure them that selections change with the season. They can circle fewer than five or choose “Other.” Ask which characteristic they have needed most lately.

- **Someone is worn out from serving or feels it's an obligation.** Name that this guide isn't about adding more to anyone's plate. It's about joy, sustainability, and the right fit. The "Notice & Reflect" prompts about energy and drain are especially for them.

Our desire is that you catch the vision for *Created to Serve* and communicate that vision to people in your group with joy and enthusiasm. This isn't just another program—it's an opportunity for people to discover the answer to one of life's most profound questions: what is my purpose?

Note: Please make sure you've picked up copies of *Created to Serve* for each person in your group. This resource is also available for digital download thecreek.org/acts.

Below you'll find questions and instructions that lead you through guiding your group to engage with the first part of *Created to Serve*.

Overview and opening questions (10 minutes)

Begin by explaining what you'll be doing for the next three weeks and why. The vision and enthusiasm will be most effectively communicated in your own words, but feel free to use/paraphrase this:

For the next three weeks, we are going to shift the regular rhythms of our group time to engage with a resource designed to help us discover the specific and special ways God has invited us to partner with Him.

As we explore how God moves in power through ordinary people, we want to recognize that God wants to move in power through *us*. To do that, we will spend time both individually and as a group examining our identity, our calling, and our purpose.

- If you could ask God one question about Himself, what would it be?
- If you could ask God one question about yourself, what would it be?

Sometimes it feels like we have more questions than answers about who God is and what He wants from us.

Scripture and discussion (15 minutes)

Let's look at a few verses together to see what we discover about our identity, calling, and purpose.

Ask someone to read John 1:9-13.

- What do these verses teach us about our identity in Jesus?

Ask someone to read Matthew 22:37-39.

- What do you notice about how Jesus summarizes our calling—how God wants us to live?

Ask someone to read Ephesians 2:8-10.

- What does verse 10 tell us about why God created the Church (that's what the plural “you” is referring to!)?
- Taken together, what picture do these three passages reveal of how God views us and what His invitation is to us?
- On a scale of 1–10, how confident are you that you understand the specific purposes for which God has created you? (1 = no idea; 10 = fully confident)

Ask people to jot down their number. You will return to it in the final session to see how the experience has helped.

Engaging with *Created to Serve* (35 minutes)

We have a resource that’s going to help us discover more about who God has created us to be. We’ll be spending time with it together as a group.

Hand out the Created to Serve guides at this time.

Let’s turn together to the Introduction.

Choose to have someone read the Introduction out loud or invite people to read it to themselves.

- What stood out to you as you read?
- How do you respond to the distinctions the guide makes between identity, calling, and purpose? Which of the three is easiest for you to believe? Which is hardest?

In 1 Corinthians, Paul describes the church as one body with many parts. Each part is given a gift to benefit the body. Let’s read what he says.

Invite someone to read 1 Corinthians 12:7 and 12-26.

- Why, according to this passage, is it important for us to function in the body of Christ in the way that God designed?
- Verses 15-24 describe parts of the body feeling unimportant or looking down on one another. Have you ever felt like you didn’t have much to contribute? What might change if you believed you were needed?

As Christians, our identity is that we are beloved children of God. As such, we are called to serve not to *become* children of God, but *because* we're children of God. We are called to love God and

love others. And God has created us each to carry out that love in specific ways. *Created to Serve* is designed to help us take the next step in becoming a healthy “body part” in the body of Christ.

We are going to spend time interacting with Part 1 of this guide together right now.

Invite someone to read the first page of Part 1: Explore God’s Heart and Character out loud.

- **(Optional)** How do you respond to the quote from A.W. Tozer: “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us?” How might that be true?

We are going to give ourselves time to respond to the material on pages 6-8 right now on our own.

Give people 10-15 minutes to interact with the material on their own, including the two checklists and the “I am drawn to God’s...” sentences. Then bring everyone back together.

- **(Optional)** What stood out to you from this experience?
- Would each of you share one of the sentences you wrote on page 8 and what it means to you? Why did that characteristic of God stand out to you in this season?

Share your own sentence first to set the tone, then invite others to follow.

Before our next life group meeting, please take time to complete the next three sections of this guide: **“Explore Spiritual Gifts,” “Explore Passions and Causes,” and “Explore Your Abilities.”** Plan on about 15–30 minutes per section and consider spreading them out over the week rather than doing them all at once. Setting aside the time to do this while we are apart will make for a rich time of sharing when we come back together. Come ready to share your top two or three discoveries from each section. If you can, ask a friend or family member where they see you come alive.

Send a text or email midweek to encourage everyone to keep going.

Prayer (10 minutes)

Close your time together in prayer.

Invite the group to read Exodus 34:6-7 aloud together (it appears at the top of Part 1 in the guide).

Let’s begin by praising God for who He is. Look back at the sentences you wrote on page 8. In a moment, each person is invited to pray one short sentence of praise based on the characteristic of God that captured your heart. For example: “God, thank You that You are compassionate.”

After people have an opportunity to pray, continue.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we now come to you with our requests. We will each pray aloud the needs we are asking you to meet, and the rest of us will join silently in those prayers.

After people have an opportunity to pray, continue.

God, as we prepare to spend time in the coming week discovering who you have created us to be, I pray these words over us adapted from the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 3:

I pray that out of Your glorious riches you will strengthen us with power through Your Spirit in our inmost being, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. And I pray that we, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that we may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Amen.

Provide one final reminder for people to complete Parts 2, 3, and 4 this week on their own.