



REVIEW

Discuss and review **SomeTime** with your group.

(See “Bible Study Weeks 3-5” for tips on this discussion.)

- How has it gone asking your friends the “Sometime...” question?
- What has gone well?
- What are some of your fears? Hesitations?
- What are some of the challenges you’re facing? (Challenges asking the “Sometime...” question? Challenges setting up a time to connect?)
- Have you run into any other friends or classmates that you felt God prompting you to consider exploring their spiritual journey?

PRAY

CONNECT

1. Tell the group about a time when you overcame a fear. What enabled you to overcome it? (If more than 8 people in the group divide into smaller groups.)

Categories to consider: dating, sports, performances, debate, acting, speaking, fear of failing, fear of rejection, fear of the dentist or doctor.

INTRODUCE

[Prelude to I Corinthians—Group Reflection]

In a moment, we are going to look at a letter written by the Apostle Paul as he reflects on his experience speaking to a Greek audience. Before we turn to Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, let’s consider his audience. . .

Here is a list of some famous ancient Greeks...
Hippocrates—“Father of Medicine”

Socrates—Philosopher credited as one of the founders of western philosophy

Plato—Philosopher, student of Socrates, founded the first institute of higher education in the western world

Aristotle—Philosopher, student of Plato, first to create a comprehensive system of Western philosophy

Euclid—Mathematician, created the fundamentals of modern geometry

Pythagoras—Philosopher and mathematician, discovered the Pythagorean theorem

2. As you imagine the cultural values of Ancient Greece, what do you think were some of their values?

- The Greeks placed a high value on wisdom, cleverness, & rationality (See also 1 Corinthians 1:17, 20-22)

3. Put yourself in Paul’s place... If you personally were to explain the gospel to a culture that valued wisdom, how would you approach them?

(Take a few notes; this question will be referenced later.)

READ

[Background to I Corinthians]

During Paul’s second missionary journey, he fled to Achaia (southern Greece) for his own safety, and visited the city of Corinth. Since many people became believers there, he stayed in Corinth for a year and a half to teach them.

Corinth was a cosmopolitan commercial center famous for its intellectual and material prosperity and was honored with being the capital of Achaia. But it also became famous for its corruption. In fact, Greek plays



commonly portrayed a citizen of Corinth as either a drunk or a prostitute.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

DISCUSS

4. According to this passage, how did Paul *not* approach the Corinthians with the gospel?

(Ask students to reference their answer in the Bible passage)

- Not with superiority of speech (2:1)
- Not with superior wisdom (2:1 & 2:2)
- Not with persuasive words (2:4)
- Not with arrogance, confidence,
- See also v 1:17, “Not with cleverness of speech”

5. According to this passage, what was Paul’s approach (and perspective) as he preached the Greeks? (In contrast to what he did not do)

- He came in humility (2:1 not with superiority of any kind)
- He came in simplicity (2:2 determined to know nothing but Christ)
- His message was centered on Christ (2:2) and the testimony of God (2:1, see also 1 John 5:9).
- He relied on the Spirit to guide him (2:4). His teaching was dependent on God to persuade men, NOT on Paul’s ability to persuade men. 1:17 “[Christ sent me] ...to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.”
- See also 1:28-31: “by His doing you are in Christ Jesus”. He depended on God, not himself, to bring about salvation.
- See also 1:20-21: He leaned on the gospel (v21), which is Wisdom from God, not the wisdom of the world.

Summarize: Paul demonstrated that success in witnessing is simple: talk about Jesus as you depend on the Holy Spirit and leave the results to God.

6. How does Paul’s approach contrast or relate to your answers to the previous question, “If you were to explain the gospel to a culture that valued wisdom, how would you approach them?”

(Keep in mind students’ answers to question #4. Affirm similarities & draw out contrasts.)

7. Why did Paul use the approach he did?

- So that the faith of the Corinthians would not rest on the wisdom of men (v5). This is reiterated

in 1:17, 18—“so that the cross of Christ would not be made void”

- Said another way, so that the Corinthians would know that in “the gospel is the power of God for salvation.” (Romans 1:16) This power is not found in the wisdom or eloquence of mankind, such an understanding invalidates what Jesus has done.

Paul knew the power of the gospel (who Jesus is, what He’s done, and why it matters) as he followed the Holy Spirits leading.

8. What were some of Paul’s emotions as he talked about Jesus with the Corinthians?

- Weakness, fear, and trembling

9. As you imagine yourself starting a spiritual conversation with a friend, can you relate to these emotions? Why or why not? (Help students express their fears.)

[CLOSING STORY]

Sam, an older staff member with Cru, had been stopping by JJ’s dorm room for several weeks to talk about what it means to be a follower of Christ. JJ was definitely interested, but his interest was still a private one. JJ’s roommate on the other hand, was actively involved in his faith. It was a part of who he was and he often joined JJ during these conversations. One day Sam, JJ, and his roommate had just finished a great conversation as they discussed the Bible together. But right when Sam was leaving, one of the cool girls from down the hall stopped by. Since Sam definitely did not look like a college student, it led to an obvious question. And she asked it—out loud... “Who was that???”

JJ froze speechless with embarrassment. He honestly did not even know where to begin and had no idea how to escape the question without detriment to his image. Though his roommate was quick to chime in, the second it took for him to respond felt like an eternity of humiliation for JJ.

Even more shocking for JJ was his roommate’s response, “That was our Bible study leader... would you like to join us next week!?”

That response changed JJ. To JJ’s astonishment, his roommate was not ashamed, not embarrassed, and, more than that, his roommate cared more about giving this girl an opportunity to know Jesus than he cared about getting a date with her (or her friends). To JJ,

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this was socially reckless, unthinkably reckless. JJ recognized that it was clear who his roommate's God was—and his unashamed faith indelibly changed JJ.

Who do you relate to more: JJ, his roommate, or somewhere in-between?

Verse to think on: Romans 1:16a—"I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for Salvation to everyone who believes"

CLOSING PRAYER