

God So Loved the World

FBC Small-Group Guide
Week of April 22nd, 2007

Introduction

Relativism may well be the religion of our day. Tolerance is espoused as virtuous and even "godly." Yet, nowhere in the Scriptures do we find relativism affirmed. Instead of tolerance, the Bible calls us to something much higher – love. When Pope Benedict XVI addressed the issue, he said: *"Having a clear faith based on the creed of the church, is often labeled today as fundamentalism, whereas relativism, which is letting oneself be tossed and swept along by every wind of teaching, looks like the only attitude acceptable to today's standards."* Pope Benedict XVI

Sadly, creeds have fallen out of favor. The Apostle's Creed, which in generations past was habitually read at worship services, begins like so: *"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord."* That's not popular today in our tolerant culture. This week as we continue our four-week look at missions, we look together at Psalm 96, a psalm that was written in a culture where the people all around worshipped many different gods. The message that there is only one God who alone should be worshipped was probably as radical then as it is today.

These small group materials will be available at www.fbcdavis.org.

Getting Started (to get group discussion going):

- Relativism is the belief that truth is not absolute, but relative, varying between persons and groups. Read the introduction above.
- We live in a post-Christian culture where gods are plentiful. What are some of the many gods worshipped in our culture?

Discussion Questions:

1. Introduction: Read Psalm 96.
2. What is the writer of this Psalm inviting God's people to do?
3. To whom does the writer encourage us to declare God's glory?
4. What might that have looked like in his culture? What would that look like in our culture?
5. Why do you think the Psalmist is so passionate to see God's glory proclaimed throughout the earth?
6. What is the Psalmist saying about the nations?
7. Often we think of worship as something we do individually or corporately as a church. How does this Psalm broaden our understanding of worship?
8. God's heart has always been for the nations, though at different points in history, his people have forgotten this. Jesus renewed this by making his endeavor a global one. Can you think of some New Testament references that underscore Jesus' heart for the nations?
9. The last part of the Psalm paints a picture that involves even Creation worshipping God. What does this all mean?

Getting Personal:

1. Some have described a "World Christian" as someone who is actively involved in Missions, even if they never go to the Mission Field. How can we take an active role in Missions while living here in the U.S.?
2. As a group, brainstorm different prayer needs related to Missions (perhaps group members know Missionaries who need prayer; perhaps the group knows of hot-spots in the world that require prayer). For more information about current prayer needs visit: www.om.org or www.wycliffe.net.

Putting it into Practice (ideas for groups):

1. If your group has not yet adopted a missionary, consider adopting one of FBC's missionaries. Adopting a missionary allows you to build a care relationship with one of our FBC missionaries.
2. If your group already has adopted an FBC missionary, consider sending him or her a care package sometime this month. Or encourage your missionary by having every group member send him/her an email of encouragement on a specific day of this month.