



**Part One**  
**Group Discussion Guide**

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# The Pioneer Spirit

## Discussion Guide

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### PART-TWO: (separate guide)

6. Growing Deeper with God
7. Finding Comfort in Death
8. Looking Forward to Christ's Return
9. Building Healthy Relationships
10. Allowing Christ to Finish His Work

## Series Overview

This world needs the Pioneer Spirit. We live in an upside-down world. Church planting can turn the world right-side up, helping people become followers of Christ. Let's explore the importance of the Pioneer Spirit.

## Purpose of This Guide

The primary purpose of this group guide is to reinforce and deepen the lessons of the Grace Church message series: **The Pioneer Spirit**.

You may choose to use this guide:

- with your Grace Group.
- with any group of people interested in knowing what the Bible says about these topics.

# 1-Turning the World Right-Side Up

Scripture: [Acts 17:1-5](#)

## Icebreaker: Describe the Culture

Make a list to describe the culture in your neighborhood.

[Note: If group members are from different neighborhoods, make a separate list for each one.]

*Culture = behavior patterns, beliefs, tastes, education, hobbies*

## Discussion Questions: Right-Side Up

- Paul's plan was to evangelize the main city of the area. The newly established church would reach out to the surrounding areas ([Acts 17:1-4](#)). Discuss how this model for church planting can be effective.
- How was Paul's message different when he spoke to the Gentiles ([Acts 17:21-24](#))?
- How do people who are not believers view the universe? Considering their views, what are some ways to make it easier for them to hear the Gospel?
- What was the non-believers' accusation against Paul ([Acts 17:5-6](#))? Discuss how non-believers may view you.

## Dig a Little Deeper: Methods of Witnessing

Consider the following methods of witnessing. Which ones have you used?

<i>Method</i>	<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Used It?</i>
Shared my faith story	<b>John 4:29,</b> <b>Acts 22:3-8</b>	
Answered questions about my faith	<b>Col 4:6, John 9:8-11,</b> <b>1Pet 3:15</b>	
Explained the Scriptures	<b>Acts 8:30-35,</b> <b>Acts 17:1-3</b>	
Wrote about the gospel	<b>John 20:31,</b> <b>Luke 1:4</b>	
Lived in ways that glorified God	<b>Mat 5:16</b>	

### Application Exercise: Prayer to Reach Our Culture

Pray, asking for God's help to effectively communicate the timeless message of the resurrection. Ask Him to show you how to adapt what you say to relate to the culture of your audience.

## 2-Becoming Followers of the Lord

Scripture: [1The 1:2-10](#)

### Icebreaker: American Idols

Make a list of idols in America today.

*Idol = anything you allow to replace God or obscure your vision of God*

### Discussion Questions: To and From

- Describe Paul's satisfaction with each of the following groups of new converts.
  - The Thessalonians ([1The 1:2-3](#))
  - The Corinthians ([1Cor 1:4-7](#))
  - The Ephesians ([Eph 1:15-16](#))
  - The Philippians ([Php 1:3-6](#))
- What is the difference between hearing the Gospel and opening your heart to God ([1The 1:6-7](#) and [Rev 3:20](#))?
- Many of the Thessalonians lost their homes and spent time in jail because of their faith in Christ ([1The 2:14](#)). How could they have received the Gospel in **joy** ([1The 1:6](#))?
- What does it mean to turn **to** God **from** idols ([1The 1:9](#))? From what idols did you turn when you accepted Christ as Savior?
- For what were the Thessalonians waiting ([1The 1:10](#))? Discuss the paradox that while the kingdom of Christ is yet to come, He is also already here with us ([John 14:3](#) and [John 14:23](#)).

## Dig a Little Deeper: Inward / Outward

Inward changes produce outward evidence.

<i>1The 1:3</i>	<i>Inward</i>	<i>Outward</i>
Your work of faith	Faith: <b>Rom 10:17, Heb 11:1</b>	Work: <b>Jas 2:17-18</b>
Labor of love	Love: <b>Rom 5:8</b>	Labor: <b>Heb 6:10</b>
Patience of hope	Hope: <b>Rom 8:24-25</b>	Patience: <b>Rom 8:23</b>

### Application: Where Did I Spend My Time?

Think about where you spent your time in the past month. Did the way you spent your time draw you closer to God or interfere with your relationship with God?

		
I spent my time on things that deepened my relationship with God.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1	I spent my time on things that harmed my relationship with God.

Identify any idols that are harming your relationship with God. Make a plan to eliminate those idols.

## 3-Developing Others Spiritually

Scripture: [1The 2:1-12](#)

### Icebreaker: Beyond Words

Try using different facial expressions, hand gestures, and postures to convey the following.

- gentleness
- interest
- compassion
- frustration
- boredom
- anger

### Discussion Questions: Message Style

- Compare and contrast being a physical parent with being a spiritual parent.
- What are the advantages of being gentle with people as you tell them about Christ ([1The 2:7](#))?
- To bring the Message with love requires more than words. What are some ways to lovingly share the Gospel ([1The 2:8](#) and [1John 3:16](#))?
- Why is diligence an important factor in developing others spiritually ([1The 2:9](#))?

## Dig a Little Deeper: My Manner

When you aim to help people grow closer to Christ, what is your manner in doing it?

<i>Manner</i>	<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
Lovingly	<b>Mark 10:21, Php 1:15-17</b>	
Urgently	<b>2Cor 5:20, Eze 33:7-9</b>	
Fearlessly	<b>Eph 6:19-20, Acts 4:29</b>	
Clearly and courteously	<b>1Pet 3:15, Col 4:4-6</b>	

## Application Exercise: Ready to Disciple

How do you know if you are ready to develop another person spiritually?

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Like Me &lt; - - - - -&gt; Not Like Me</i>
My relationship with Christ is my first priority.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
I use God's Word to guide my life.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
I love others and long for them to be close to Christ.	5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

- If these criteria sound like you, ask God for a person that you can help nurture in his/her walk with God.
- If these criteria do not sound like you, ask God to send someone to hold you accountable in your walk with Him.

## 4-Handling Spiritual Opposition

Scripture: [1The 2:13-20](#)

### Icebreaker: Debate: Subtle or Direct?

Think about the types of opposition you face in everyday life. Divide into two groups. Give each group a statement. Have each group make a case to support their statement.

- Statement-1: Direct opposition is more difficult to handle than subtle opposition.
- Statement-2: Subtle opposition is more difficult to handle than direct opposition.

### Discussion Questions: Spiritual Opposition

- When you have experienced any form of persecution, how did it affect you ([1The 2:14-18](#))?

- drained my energy
- ate up my time
- tempted me to do things under my own power
- other

- What can members of your group do to help one another during times of spiritual opposition?

- Which of the following has helped you when you feel under attack?

- Praise and thank God ([1The 5:18](#)).
- Let the Holy Spirit control your actions ([Pro 21:23](#) and [Jas 1:25](#)).
- Pray intensely ([Heb 4:15-16](#)).
- Trust God ([John 6:68-69](#)).
- Continue in patience ([Jas 5:10-11](#)).

- Pray for the spiritual welfare of each member in your group.

## Dig a Little Deeper: Avoid the Traps

Consider the following traps and how to avoid them.

<i>Trap</i>	<i>How to Avoid It</i>
Isolate yourself from others.	Stay close to God and other believers [ <a href="#">John 17:20-22</a> ].
Engage in leading conversations.	Be careful of the types of conversations in which you take part [ <a href="#">2Cor 11:3</a> , <a href="#">2Tim 2:23-26</a> , <a href="#">Jas 1:13-15</a> ].
Allow others to appeal to your self-interests.	Guard against your pride and guard your heart [ <a href="#">Eph 2:1-3</a> , <a href="#">1John 2:15-16</a> ].

### Application Exercise: Am I Avoiding the Traps?

Think about what's been happening in your life over the last several months. How well have you avoided the traps in the table?

- If you've been struggling in one or more areas, pray asking God to help you avoid those traps going forward. Pick a verse to memorize and repeat it to yourself when you sense there is a trap nearby.
- If you have not been struggling recently, pray a prayer of thanks. Ask for continued protection.

# 5-Supporting Others in Affliction

Scripture: [1The 3:1-13](#)

## Icebreaker: Would You Rather

When you are experiencing rough times would you rather have someone:

- spend time with you and simply listen?
- offer you advice?
- read comforting Bible verses to you?
- other?

## Discussion Questions: Comfort During Affliction

- What was the significance of Paul sending Timothy to the Thessalonians ([1The 3:1-2](#))?
  
- In what way did the Thessalonians bring comfort to Paul ([1The 3:7](#))?
  
- What did Paul want for the Thessalonians ([1The 3:3-10](#))? Make a list of ways to strengthen and comfort those who are suffering.
  
- Through what means does God encourage and comfort believers?
  - ▶ [Romans 15:4](#)
  - ▶ [Acts 9:31](#)

## Dig a Little Deeper: Prayers for Encouragement

Study these passages. Which ones could you use as a model for your prayers when you need encouragement or want to encourage others?

- [Nehemiah 6:9](#)
- [Psalm 119:28](#)
- [Colossians 1:9-11](#)
- [2Thessalonians 2:16-17](#)

### Application Exercise: Encourage and Comfort

In the coming week, do something to encourage and comfort a person who is struggling.

Here are a few ideas:

- Invite the person out for coffee and simply listen to them.
- Telephone the person and pray for them.
- Write a prayer for the person. Send it by email or in a greeting card.
- Offer to do some chores for the person to lighten their load.

[notes]

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