



NOVEMBER STUDY GUIDE

UNSUNG HEROES OF THE KINGDOM

WE PARTICIPATE IN THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM AS WE LOVE OTHERS WITH THE
LOVE OF CHRIST

In November, we explore how the Kingdom of God is often expressed through the small yet significant actions of "unsung heroes." Each week we will explore a number of lesser-known New Testament figures who model various acts of love, service, encouragement, and sacrifice in what often seem to be very ordinary ways. By studying their stories, we learn that every act of love and faithfulness, no matter how small, contributes to the expression and expansion of God's Kingdom.

Consider how together, the small acts of these "unsung heroes" led to the expansion of the ecclesia across planet Earth at an astonishing rate. Might their witness encourage each of us to step out in faith, courage, hospitality, and service as expressions of Kingdom reality in our everyday lives.

This little series is also a great opportunity for us to notice and encourage one another in the acts of love we observe - big and small.



GET READY FOR CONTEND '24

This will be our first-ever Coast Community gathering dedicated to “Contending for the Renewal of the Central Coast.” This inaugural event will take place from November 22-24, 2024, and if you haven’t already, we would love for you to [RSVP](#) and join us for this significant gathering.

The Contend Conference is a unique opportunity for all parts of Coast Community to come together, celebrate what God has been doing, and share our dreams for the year ahead. We will reflect on the past year’s highlights, stories, and challenges and creatively explore how we might co-labour with one another to strengthen our shared commitment to contending for the renewal of the Central Coast.



WEEK 1

Ananias and Lydia

Key Concepts

Ananias of Damascus - Love Overcoming Fear (Acts 9:10-19): Ananias shows courage and love by embracing Saul (later Paul), a known persecutor of Christians, and helping him receive the Holy Spirit.

Lydia - Hospitality and Openness to God (Acts 16:13-15, 40): Lydia, a businesswoman, opens her heart and home to early believers, demonstrating the power of hospitality in advancing the Kingdom.

Key Scriptures



Acts 9:10-19 (Ananias and Saul)

Acts 16:13-15, 40 (Lydia and the early church)

Hebrews 13:2 (Hospitality to strangers)

Dialogue Questions



What does it mean to you that Jesus' self-emptying love is an expression of God's very nature? How does this shape your understanding of God?

Reflect on Philippians 2:1-11. What might it mean to have "the mindset of Christ" and how could/should this show up in our daily lives?

How might self-emptying love differ from burnout-inducing self-denial? How can we discern between the two?

WEEK 1 | ANANIAS AND LYDIA



"The soul cannot live without love. But it must have love not only for God but also for the neighbour. The power of love in a person's life transforms everything, making even what seems lowly into an act of grace."

— St. Macrina the Younger



Personal Reflection

Consider the people in your life or community who might need a gesture of courage or hospitality. How might you act as an "Ananias" or "Lydia" this week?

Experiment

Identify someone you wouldn't normally spend time with and find a way to connect. Or, open your home for a meal or gathering that fosters relationships that cross boundaries.

WEEK 2

Tabitha and Zacchaeus

Key Concepts

Life in the Kingdom is both practical and transformational. This week we see the profound impact of both simple acts of kindness and charity, as well as the deep transformation that can take place when we encounter Jesus

Tabitha (Dorcas) - Love through Service (Acts 9:36-43): Tabitha's good works and acts of charity highlight the importance of practical service in the Kingdom.

Zacchaeus - Personal Transformation and Community Change (Luke 19:1-10): Zacchaeus, a tax collector, undergoes a radical transformation that affects his entire community.

Supporting Scriptures

Acts 9:36-43 (Tabitha's acts of charity)

Luke 19:1-10 (Zacchaeus and repentance)

Dialogue Questions

Tabitha was known for her acts of kindness and charity. In what ways can we serve our communities practically and make a difference?

Zacchaeus' story shows that transformation begins with a personal encounter with Jesus. What changes in your life have led to a positive impact on those around you?

WEEK 2 | TABITHA AND ZACCHAEUS

How can we balance the call to others-focused love with the need for self-care?



"It is not the greatness of the work that is pleasing to God, but the love with which it is performed."

— St. Gregory the Great



Personal Reflection

Reflect on your own experiences of both practicality and transformation. Think about times when you have either extended or received practical kindness. Think too of times of encounter and transformation. How is it that both of these dynamics are at work in the Christian life? What might that reveal to you about God?

Experiment

This week, ask the Holy Spirit for an opportunity to perform a simple act of service that meets a practical need. Ask for eyes to see and a heart to respond. See what happens.

WEEK 3

Barnabas and Phoebe

Key Concepts

We have spoken a lot about others-focused, self-giving love. This kind of love reflects the very being of God. Thinking and speaking well of others - being their champion and advocate - is a very real demonstration of this love. When we are the recipients of such encouragement and support, we understand just how much it can matter!

Barnabas - Encouragement and Restoration (Acts 4:36-37; 9:26-27; 11:22-26; 13:1-2; 15:36-39): Known as the "Son of Encouragement," Barnabas demonstrates grace, encouragement, and mentorship.

Phoebe - Servant Leadership and Advocacy (Romans 16:1-2): Phoebe, a deacon and a patron, models servant leadership and the importance of supporting the mission.

Supporting Scriptures

- **Acts 4:36-37 (Barnabas' encouragement)**
- **Romans 16:1-2 (Phoebe's commendation)**

Dialogue Questions

How does encouragement play a vital role in the life of the church? Share a time when encouragement helped you grow in your faith.

Phoebe was a connector and advocate in the early church. How can we support one another in our spiritual journeys and missions?

WEEK 3 | BARNABAS AND PHOEBE



"The rich man is not one who is in possession of much, but one who gives much. For what he gives away remains his forever."

— St. John Chrysostom



Personal Reflection

Think about someone in your life who may need encouragement or support. List all the ways you might conceivably encourage them? Aim for 50!

Experiment

Call or write a note of encouragement to someone.