

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better.*

Read II Corinthians 4:1-12 aloud.

1. What are some of the words in 2-4 that relate to seeing?

What does verse 2 say we are called to do?
Set forth the truth plainly.

Why is it that the gospel can be so clear to us, yet so difficult for others to swallow?

2. According to verse 6, what shines out of our hearts?

What kind of actions cause non-Christians to notice that God is living in us? *Probably not bombing abortion clinics.*

3. What keeps us from “losing heart”? *Look back to 3:18. The fact that God is revealing his glory and transforming us.*

So if God has put the light in us and sent us on a mission of proclaiming, all of us are pumped about evangelism, right?

What concerns do you have about letting God’s light shine through you to bless non-Christians?

How could we incorporate some II Cor. 4 optimism into our view of evangelism?

4. Why are we tempted to confine our faith to the church building?

What are some factors that diminish the brightness of God’s light in our lives?

Church bickering, sin in our lives, pretending we are perfect/unable to confess, lack of devotion to Jesus.

5. What are some words that verses 5 and 7 use to describe our role? *Servants, clay jars.*

What do these two images say about our authority and power?

How does knowing that you are doing God’s work give you more confidence to serve him?

What is God’s work in the world? What is he striving to accomplish?

Why do you suppose God entrusted his precious light to clay jars that are so often unworthy vessels? *What other vessels are there?*

6. Verses 8-10 make some surprising contrasts between our situation and our attitude. What are some of them?

How can we be hopeful if our situation is rotten?

Who is someone who demonstrates this unbelievable hope?

7. If you summarize this passage, what does it say about... Non-Christians?

God and his desires for non-Christians?

Our role in carrying out God’s plans for non-Christians?

How well are you doing at joining God in his desires for the non-Christians you know?

How could you be a better partner in helping God re-connect with the non-Christians you know?

How could our group support one another in carrying out God’s dreams for our community? How could we be more intentional about involving newcomers?

Invite non-members to the group, plan an outreach party, set aside an empty chair at each meeting and pray for a person to fill it.

III. Other resources

The point – God has a mission of reaching the world, and we are invited to play a part in that mission. We will be most fulfilled when we join God in this work.

Prayer

Pray for someone who does not know Christ to fill your empty chair. Ask God for open eyes to notice people who are ready to hear the story of Jesus.

Seek a greater influence for God. Ask that your light be brightened.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Bring a small clay pot to the meeting, or maybe multiple pots.

What are some good uses for a clay pot?

Divide into teams and see who can list 10 uses the fastest.

Read II Cor. 4:6-7 aloud.

How does God use clay pots? *Hold treasure.*

How many of you got that on your list?

Who are the clay pots? *You & me.*

How are we like pots?

What is God's treasure that he puts in us?

Verse 6 uses the word light 3 times.

How could we become clay pots who hold more light?

"The Church has Left the Building" is a series of Small Group discussion guides written in support of the Missional Church curriculum by David Wray and Chris Benjamin. It is designed around the concept of adults discussing material in Bible class and then processing it in small group meetings during the same week. These guides, as well as the Missional Church class curriculum, will also work independently. An alternate approach would be to study one curriculum and follow it up with the other one later.

For small group tools, go to www.collegehills.org, then Ministries, then LIFE groups.

The Church has Left the Building

II Corinthians 4 – outreach

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **Sharing God's treasure with others.**

There is a good reason for the church to leave the building – God is at work in lives around us who have not yet discovered the light. God has a mission for the world, and we get to help! There are few things we can do to bring greater glory to God than to inspire another to praise God with us.

II Corinthians 4 is a powerful chapter that talks about God's incredible power that changes us so that others can see God's light in us. Even though we will always be far from perfect, others can see the change Jesus makes in our lives. Hopefully, they will want to find what we have found.

Leadership tip: Include an empty chair in your group meeting each week. Point out that there is an empty seat for a guest to be with us next time. Pray for God to bring someone to fill that chair. If there is no room for an empty chair in your circle, you may need to talk about multiplying into two groups. Your group will never enjoy its full potential if it is not reaching out to bring in new people on a regular basis.

I. Relate *Use a few of these to introduce the theme and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage individuals through these questions.*

- ❖ When have you gone on a mission trip? What did you do? How did it impact you?
- ❖ My personal happy meal would include...
- ❖ Who led you to love Jesus? How did you come to be a believer?