

Group discussion Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. 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. Save time for “the big question.”

Read Acts 4:1-22 aloud.

1. What impresses you about Peter and John?
2. How would you describe the Jewish council?

Why were they concerned about Peter and John healing the lame man?

Why didn't they punish Peter and John more severely?
A few weeks earlier, these same leaders had arranged the execution of Jesus, so they had the authority to punish.

3. Read verse 13 again. What is going on in this verse?

What did not add up about Peter and John?
Fishermen were not supposed to be articulate Bible scholars. Courageous in a storm, perhaps, but not courageous in a debate.

What had transformed these fishermen?
They had been with Jesus.

What was it about Jesus that changed these simple men?

In what ways could this happen in our lives? How can we “be with Jesus”?

How has Jesus changed you?
Ask for make-over stories: Before I met Jesus... but now...

4. What prevents God from changing your life like he could?

† **The big question** If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.

Imagine that it is December 31, 2009, and we are gathered to celebrate New Year's Eve. A friend asks, “So how did your faith grow in 2009?” What would you like to say?

This morning in worship, we were asked to fill out a commitment card to set some goals for spiritual growth (text below). What did you write on your card?

What are some ways our group could grow this year?

Pursuing the Heart of God Growth – Becoming like God

“Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.” I Peter 1:15

1. How do you respond to the following statement...

I resign as master of the world and as master of my life, so that God may be in control.

2. Taking stock. How is your faith different that it was one year ago?
3. Looking ahead. What is one way you hope to grow this year?

Ideas from Vision 2009 brochure

- Be intentional about avoiding temptation and about putting yourself in places where you are likely to grow.
- Memorize Bible verses.
- Discover a new way to use a gift for God.
- Get involved in a new ministry.
- Deepen your faith by investing in prayer and study.
- Find people to support your growth — a LIFE group or a Bible class or someone else.
- Develop better habits for worship (arrive early, sing more enthusiastically, take notes, pray beforehand).

Resources

Bible notes

- You need to read Acts 3 to understand Acts 4.
- We don't know how much time had passed since Acts 2, which was seven weeks after Jesus' death. It is safe to say that Jesus' death was still fresh in the minds of the apostles and the Jewish leaders.

Prayer ideas –

Praise God for his holiness.

Thank God for making us new and calling us to be holy.

Ask for strength, wisdom, and friends to help us be holy.

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.*

Prayer of praise for the good things God is doing.

Take the group outside. Pair each adult with a kid, and send them out to see who can find the most things that are starting to grow this spring. Maybe see who can be the first to find 10 different kinds of plants that are budding.

Go back inside to discuss...

How many of those buds could we have seen two weeks ago?

How did these buds appear overnight?

How is that like our walk with God?

Explain the context and then read Acts 4:13-14 aloud.

What had changed in Peter and John? How were these guys different after Jesus died?

What helps us grow to become more like God?

What are some ways that you would like to grow this year?



February 9, 2009

LIFE Group Guide

Acts 4 – Growth – Becoming like God

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **growing in faith in 2009.**

College Hills is "Pursuing the Heart of God" in 2009. This is week 1 of 3.

Feb. 15 A Year of Growth – Becoming like God

Feb. 22 A Year of Compassion – Seeing what God sees

Mar. 1 A Year of Outreach – Doing what God does

This is a great opportunity to build and strengthen your group. We get three straight weeks of group meetings, and the sermons will give strong encouragement for everyone to attend a group. Invite a guest – your group will be blessed.

Your group should meet all three weeks. A few smaller groups may join the "Table Talks" as a way to fish for new members, but we don't have room for everyone at the building.

Leadership tip: Always comment on the comment. For some people, speaking in front of a group is terrifying, especially if they are unfamiliar with others in the circle. Maintain eye contact with the speaker, and thank him or her. Affirm the speaker's thoughts and invite him or her to say more.

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ What is a job that looks fun but would be difficult for you to do?
- ❖ What is your best memory from 5th grade?
- ❖ How do you do with growing plants?