

IT'S TIME

*... a Journey Toward
Missional Faithfulness*

**TEACHER GUIDE
YOUTH VERSION**



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Cooperative Baptist
FELLOWSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

Greetings! You have chosen to embark on a wonderful journey. Whether you are studying *It's Time* in a large-group setting, a small-group setting, or as a part of your own quiet time, you are in store for some wonderful discoveries. As you study, you will discover a call to the missional journey. You will also discover aspects about your own passions, about the ministry of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and most importantly, about your relationship with God!

In his book, Daniel Vestal shares from his heart concerning the mission of the church and the challenges to the Christian community. Journey with Dr. Vestal as he talks about why “the time is now” for intentional, missional actions from churches and individuals. Hear his clear challenge to churches and individuals to “be the presence of Christ!” Respond to the call to be the presence of Christ in your community and the world.

This study guide is designed for ninety-minute sessions. The study is designed to offer a balance of content, interaction, and reflection. Depending on the setting in which you choose to do this study, you may want to modify the learning approaches to suit your own needs. If you are in a Sunday School class, you may choose to examine more content and facilitate more discussion. If you are doing this in a small-group setting with no time constraints, you may choose to follow the teaching plans more closely. If you are studying this on your own, you may study a question a day as you reflect on the material.

This guide presents a model for studying Dr. Vestal’s book for a variety of different settings:

In large-group dialogues . . .

- Study large blocks of information during a weekend retreat.
- Study in presentation format during a single evening.
- Study as a series of sermons and dialogues on Sundays and Wednesdays.

In small-group dialogues . . .

- Study in a class setting doing a chapter-by-chapter, week-by-week discussion for eight weeks.
- Study in a class setting examining two chapters at a time for four weeks.
- Study in a home gathering for eight weeks.

In individual study . . .

- Underline pertinent words as you read the book.
- Keep a personal journal recording insights as you read.





Regardless of the format, pray as you read, study, interact, and reflect. The words God delivers to you during your study will make a wonderful difference in your faith. There has never been a better time for such a study as this.

The missional church is a challenging concept to examine. The missional church is even more challenging to apply. Remember as you go through the study that the missional church is not another program of church growth or member enlargement. The missional church is a new way of thinking about congregational involvement as we move into the twenty-first century.

Enjoy your journey. Engage with others as you journey. Examine your own thoughts by keeping a prayer journal or a personal reflections journal. You'll find journal space in the student guide, and you will want to join with group members in reading the daily devotionals in the student guide. Experience the thrill of learning with friends and interacting with one another. Encounter again the call of Christ! *It's Time!*

The Study

This study guide is not designed to be a prescription for you to follow blindly. It is offered as one model for reflecting on Dr. Vestal's words. The questions are not meant to be exhaustive of the material but to jumpstart your creative thinking.

These discussions are designed for ninety minutes of study and interactions. If you have to vary your time for study, pick and choose questions that are most important for challenging your study group or congregational gathering.

A suggested general outline for each session follows. Be flexible and adjust your time as needed.

Welcome and Gathering	5 minutes
Call to Prayer	5 minutes
Create Interest	20 minutes
Dig Deeper	35 minutes (Include a break if needed.)
Apply to Life	20 minutes
Summary Thought	2 minutes
Benediction	3 minutes





There are no right or wrong answers to most of the questions. Give your learners plenty of freedom to explore and to interact with one another. As the teacher of this material, think of yourself more as a tour guide than as an expert. While there is no right or wrong way to teach this material, use a variety of teaching methods to keep the class engaged. Use at least three to five teaching techniques as you present the material. As you present content for discussion, limit your lectures to blocks of ten to twelve minutes at a time. Teach to meet the needs of your study group and congregation and to facilitate learning. God will bless your efforts.

There are many working definitions concerning the missional church. Dr. Vestal gives you several interpretations in his book. One working definition that may help you is this: “The missional church is about empowering people to discover and use their passions on purpose to be the presence of Christ in their worlds whether anyone joins their church or not!”

There are many other definitions that may help you. Teach to help your group grasp the concepts and apply these in their community and their world. None of us will ever completely arrive at a missional church approach. Grasp missional moments and journey toward a more fulfilling life of faith. Involve yourself in the work of the kingdom of God and see what blessings abound!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bo Prosser".

Bo Prosser
Coordinator for Congregational Life





SUMMARY THOUGHTS

Being missional people means discerning what God's mission in the world is and how we can find ways to participate in the journey. We have all been invited to participate. God has given us the ball. Now we must decide if we want to play.

BENEDICTION

Thank God for your time as a group. Thank God for the challenge to join with others and God in making a difference in the world. Pray for your group and their willingness to learn and be molded by God's Word. Pray for God's blessings on them until you meet again.



Teaching Notes



- Discover and discern the abiding presence of God within. Be mindful that God is constantly working within us.
- Nurture the interior life, the hidden life, so as to make a home in the triune God. Put “good stuff” inside so that we want to live a life for God.
- Discover (and practice) the disciplines that create a space for God—prayer, reading, meditation, study, service, and worship.
- Explore the literature of the ages that can instruct as well as inspire. Read classic and the contemporary writers.
- Embrace the complexities of our time, the ambiguities of life, and the frailty of our humanness as the means and instrument for God’s use. Think about the world and how God is present in the world.
- Learn the life and practice of prayer to experience the grace of God in Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Spirit. Open yourself to prayer so that God may enter your life.

SUMMARY THOUGHT

Spiritual formation is the first step toward allowing God to do something incredible in our lives. We all, regardless of age, have the responsibility to take seriously God’s call for our lives. As disciples, we need to be open to God working in us so that we can be God’s hands and feet and servants in the world.

BENEDICTION

Close your time with a prayer. Thank God for the time you have shared, for the lessons you have learned, and for the possibilities of being changed and formed by God.



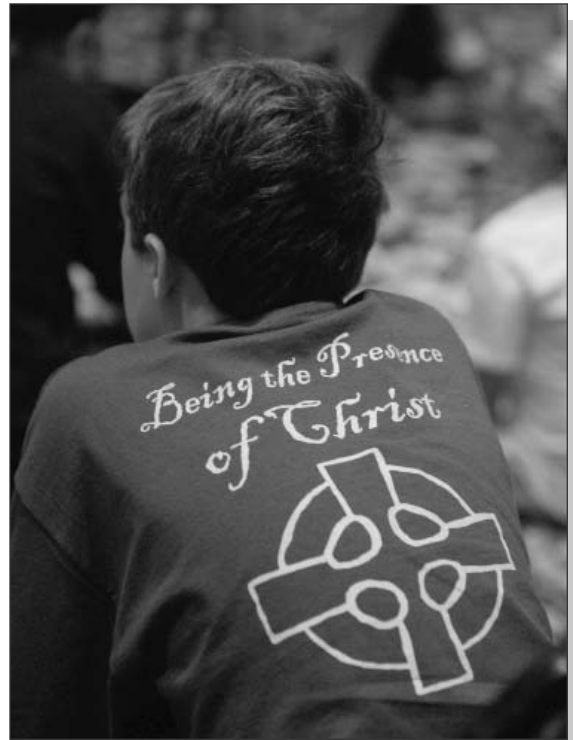


SUMMARY THOUGHT

In the text from Luke, verse 2 says, “When you pray.” It does not say, “If you pray.” Prayer is a given. Prayer is a part of life for a Christ follower. While our prayers take many different forms for many different functions, the prayer of love for our fellow brothers and sisters is a powerful expression of love we have for God and for others. We love God; we pray. It is a part of who we are as God’s children.

BENEDICTION

Choose one of Dr. Vestal’s suggestions and have your group use that suggestion for your closing prayer. Your church might have a strong relationship with an overseas missionary or a local missions effort. Your congregation might have someone of a different culture or someone with specific needs. Put names and faces to your prayer. Make it personal. Make it real. Pray!





- If so, how can that happen?
- Who can they partner with?
- What resources do they have?
- What resources do they need?
- Is this missional practice already happening? If not, when can it start?

Basically, the question is this: What does our group need to do to get busy doing the work of Christ in the world? Let them think about and answer that question. Then get busy doing it!

SUMMARY THOUGHT

We are all called—as individuals, groups, and churches—to live out and share the good news of Jesus the Christ. However, each one of us will not live out that call the same way. Our gifts and talents are different, which means that the way we live out the gospel will differ from person to person. Celebrate the differences and rejoice when missional living and working happens.

BENEDICTION

Gather your group in a circle. With eyes wide open so that everyone is looking around the circle, bless each teenager, their giftedness, their willingness to serve God, and their participation in a missional movement that can change the world. Thank God for the teens in your group and for the chance to make a difference in Jesus' name.





After a time of sharing, thank the group for being open and willing to take a risk. Explain that being people of the Great Commission is about being open to others and being willing to take a risk when you share your story. Not everyone will hear your story the same way, but your story is a part of who you are.

SUMMARY THOUGHT

Remind your group that we are a Great Commission people. In the current age of tolerance and acceptance, some of the emphasis behind sharing our faith story has been lost as we do not want to offend others. But the reality is, our story of faith is a huge part of who we are. To deny our story and not share it is to deny who God is creating us to be. We have the command to go out and share our story with the world. Our faith story makes a difference in our lives. Sharing our story with others can make a difference in the world.

BENEDICTION

For the closing prayer, thank God for each of your teenagers by name (open your eyes and peek if needed). Thank God for their stories, for their willingness to share, and for the opportunities we all have to share with others. Pray that we will all be mindful of the chances we have to share and will take the plunge and risk sharing ourselves with others so that others might hear the good news of Jesus the Christ.



- How much do we (youth group, church, etc.) talk about doing justice and mercy, and how much do we actually do justice and mercy?
- What does God want us to do with our lives? Are we doing them?



Teaching Notes

APPLY TO LIFE

Living out justice and mercy might require a behavior change for many teenagers. As Dr. Vestal wrote, “If justice and mercy are to become a way of life for us, then our hearts must be changed and must always be changed by the redeeming power of Jesus Christ. Hatred must be replaced by love. Anger must be replaced by peace. Selfishness must be replaced by grace. And the will to power must be replaced by the will to serve.” We must change the way we live for God.

Doing the things God wants us to do is not something all teenagers have on their radar screens. As a time of group brainstorming, ask your teens to think of real, doable examples of how they (and the group) can live out justice and mercy. Record their answers on a sheet of flip-chart paper or a whiteboard.

After a good list has emerged, ask them what they can do specifically to make the list become a part of their lives. Get them to think in terms of action plans and step-taking. Help them with ideas if needed.

SUMMARY THOUGHT

Living out justice and mercy will change our lives, our youth group, our church, and our world. God wants us to make that change to build the kingdom and to make a missional difference here on earth. Going back to the opening song by Steven Curtis Chapman, we need to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.”

BENEDICTION

Go back to the list from the Apply to Life section. Challenge each teen to take just one example of living out justice and mercy and making that a part of their life. Ask God for strength, courage, and wisdom in making that example a part of their life. Thank God for your time together and for the challenge we all have to change our behavior so that we might change the world.





SUMMARY THOUGHT

This generation of teenagers more than any other generation will be tempted to claim a nondenominational approach to organized religion.

Nondenominationalism is not all bad. Being a part of some larger group is not always good, either. But being Baptist in this time of doing and being church is a strong witness to God at work in the individual lives of humans while collectively seeking God's will. It's a lot like being part of a big youth group. We might not always like the person on the bus with us, but we are all on the journey together. The distinctives we claim as Baptists hold us together, define us, and shape who we are.

BENEDICTION

For a time of closing, thank God for all denominations and groups that seek to follow Christ. Pray for your group, your church, and the larger collection of churches that are Baptist and try to live out believer's baptism, the priesthood of all believers, local church autonomy, and religious liberty. Pray that your teens will seek to understand more about what it means to be Baptist.



LESSON 8

IT'S TIME . . . FOR HOPE

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-10

Teaching Notes

WELCOME AND GATHERING

Welcome everyone in your group with a warm smile. As folks gather, ask them to find a partner and share with that partner something they hope for. It could be something they hope for in life, in the immediate future, a grade, a relationship, etc. All they have to do is share something they hope for.

CALL TO PRAYER

Open your time with a prayer. Thank God for the opportunity to come together and learn. Thank God for your teenagers, your church, our freedom to worship. Pray for special requests and situations in your church and community. Pray for the future of the group and the church.

CREATE INTEREST

Divide your group into two groups. Seat each group together, facing the other group. One group will be the “gloom and doom” group. The other group will be the “hopeful” group. The goal for the “gloom and doom” group is to think of bad situations—war, death, disease, etc. The “hopeful” group is to think of where something good or hopeful can happen in that situation or can eventually come out of that situation. This exercise might be a little challenging but should create a lot of conversation.

DIG DEEPER

Ask someone to read 2 Corinthians 4:7-10. Ask these questions about the Scripture to help them understand Paul’s words. Encourage them to pay attention to what is said as they will have the opportunity to use their answers later.

- What is the treasure in jars of clay?
- When are we hard-pressed on every side?
- How are we perplexed?
- Why are we persecuted? What does that look like for a teenager who follows Christ?
- How are we struck down?
- If we have all of those things happening to us, why are we here today? Why are we standing at the end of it all?

