

## God Has Authority Small Group Guide

**Warm-up Question:** (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Did you get in trouble a lot as a child? Explain.
2. If you could become an expert in one discipline you currently have almost no knowledge or skill in, what would you choose?

**Read the following passage:** Matthew 28:16-20.

Why were people drawn to Jesus? This is an interesting question, and there is surely more than one reasonable answer. But what the Gospel of Mark emphasizes is Jesus' authority. Within the first few chapters of Mark's Gospel, we discover that Jesus has authority over demonic spirits, sickness, nature, the Sabbath, and sin! It's not surprising, then, that people began asking questions about Jesus' identity. (See, for example, Mark 1:27; 2:7; 4:41; 6:2-3.) Jesus carried God's authority.

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Authority is a complex subject. Authority is often abused now, just as it was in the first century. (We should not forget that it was Roman officials who unjustly killed both John the Baptist and Jesus.) Because of negative experiences with human authorities, we may have trouble embracing the concept of God's authority. What is your understanding of God's authority? When Jesus told his disciples that "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18) had been given to him, what did he mean? What are some implications of the reality that God has authority over us?
2. Read Luke 7:1-10. What is the connection between the centurion's understanding of authority and his faith in Jesus? How can our understanding of authority strengthen our faith? Do you have confidence that God will exercise his authority for your good? Explain.
3. The Gospels record several occasions when Jesus gave his disciples authority to heal sicknesses and drive out demons (see, for example, Luke 9:1-2; 10:17-19). These ministries also continued in the early church. Do you have any experience with healing or deliverance? Explain.
4. Read Luke 6:46-49. Why is obedience such an important component of discipleship? There are many aspects to our relationship with God. In fact, biblical metaphors for our relationship with God include father, friend, master, husband, a hen with her chicks, helper, king, healer, redeemer, and many others. Does obedience play a significant role in the way you conceptualize your relationship with God? Explain.
5. Do you consider yourself to be a confident person? Explain. How might a robust understanding of God's authority increase our confidence? How might this source of confidence overlap with or be at odds with approaches to building confidence that

are common in our current cultural context?

6. Are there any areas of your life in which you are essentially opposing God's authority in thought or deed? Explain. What are you going to do about it?

**Pray**