

new summer design!



connecting a personal and small group study with Sunday's sermon



*learning from God's creation  
part two of a two part sermon series*

*Psalm 104 and Acts 14*

**"Psalm 104"**

**June 10, 2007**

personal and small group study

**storyline** *Author: Phil Niekerk, senior small group pastor*

Steve, a close friend of mine, has recently begun to explore what it means to have an authentic relationship with Jesus. He loves to ask tough questions, some of which are unanswerable but are fun to discuss. It's great to be near him when he learns something new about God.

One Sunday afternoon, a group of guys (all too old for this) were playing a friendly game of touch football. Well, Steve got tripped up and banged his head on the turf. His bell was rung! After Steve asked us for the twentieth time what happened, we decided to get him to a hospital. As he was being treated for a concussion, Steve started into his profound questions about God again. "So, Phil," Steve asked with a huge brace around his neck and a glaze in his eye, "what happens to people who don't have the Bible? How are they supposed to know God?" That began a very deep and rich two-hour discussion that Steve to this day, thanks to the concussion, does not remember having.

But Steve asked a great question. Can people who haven't been exposed to the Bible, know who God is? Those who follow the way of Christianity believe that the Bible holds the Word and Truth of God. The Bible is like no other book because it was inspired or breathed by God as human hands wrote the words. It's the story of God revealing His nature and character to humankind. But could someone not exposed to the Bible understand, know, experience or see the one true God? A couple of the Bible writers would suggest, "yes." As we studied last week, we know that the song writer and king David wrote in Psalm 19, "The heavens declare the glory of God." In Psalm 104, David suggests that every time we enjoy a meal or a glass of wine, God the Creator and Provider should be praised.

Paul was another person who saw the glory of God in nature. What's interesting, when Paul spoke to Jews and Christians he usually referred to Scripture to teach them about God. But when he addressed Greeks and Romans who had limited exposure to Scripture, he pointed them first to nature as evidence of a Divine Creator and Provider. The problem, however, was they had deified elements of humanity and nature rather than crediting and worshipping their Creator. They worshiped things much less important than the God who made all things. I'm glad we don't do this today. Or, do we?

**Prayer**

Every time you come across beauty in nature today, say the phrase that David used in Psalm 104, "Oh Lord my God, how great you are!" Say this when you see your kids play, when you feel a breeze or the warmth of the sun, when you drive by a forest or lake, when you hear a bird sing, when you bite into a sandwich or drink a glass of juice, milk or water.

***“Oh LORD, what a variety of things you have made.”***

~ Read Psalm 104

Make a list of all the different elements of nature that David saw as evidence of God’s goodness and greatness.

? What on your list do you notice frequently? What elements of nature are your favorites to see and enjoy?

? When you see and experience your favorite aspects of nature, does your heart and mind naturally gravitate to praising and thanking God? Why or why not.

How does David describe God as Provider? What verses stand out to you?

Re-read verses 31-35. How does David conclude his thoughts about Creation? What does he do?

? How would your day change if you practiced the prayer on the previous page?

***“...turn from these worthless things to the Living God.”***

~ Read Acts 14.8-18

How did the Greeks and Romans respond when Paul and Barnabas healed a crippled man? What did they miss?

? How did they respond to being treated as “gods”? Why do you think Paul refers to nature as a “witness” to God? Look up Romans 1.20. What similar case does Paul make there?

? Do you miss opportunities to praise and worship God when His created beauty is displayed in front of you? When? What distracts you from Him?

? How can you open your heart to *explode* in joy, praise and gratitude toward God this week? Where do you need to go? What do you need to do?

**coreverse**

*“O Lord, what a variety of things you have made! In wisdom you have made them all... May the glory of the Lord continue forever! The Lord takes pleasure in all he has made!”*  
*Psalm 104.24 and 31 (NLT)*