

DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONT

“DAY OF BATTLE” Small Group Discussion Guide

LESSON 1 | IN THE ARENA

1. Tertullian wrote, “The more you mow us down, the more we grow. The blood of Christians is seed.” No doubt we all have heard testimony to this statement— incidents in which the persecution and eventual martyrdom of Christians paradoxically increased the number of believers. But is there any Scriptural justification for Tertullian’s observation? What biblical texts teach that persecution can give rise to more Gospel advance?
2. Read Jeremiah 15:15–16. How does the prophet describe his attitude toward God’s Word? What are the alternatives to such a spirit? If the Scriptures truly were “a joy and the delight of [our] heart,” what would change about our approach to the Bible? Read Jeremiah 20:7–9. In both passages, Jeremiah explains how God’s word provokes opposition. In what ways did this opposition manifest? What do we learn from the sad reality that Jeremiah’s opponents were fellow Jews— ostensibly, part of the people of God?
3. Consider the observation at the cemetery in Carthage: “Something happened here to these soldiers that would mean everything to the outcome of the war— their will to fight became greater than their will to live.” How would you describe that change? How could such a way of thinking impact our view of the advance of the Gospel?

LESSON 2 | NO TURNING BACK

4. Missions is no longer from the West to the rest. How does this shift in global advance underscore Christ’s claims in Matthew 28:18? How does it assure us that the promise of Revelation 5:9–10 will come to pass? Not only is missions no longer from the West to the rest, but in increasing numbers it is from the rest to the West. What if a missionary from Peru or the Philippines or Ethiopia planted a church in your community? And what if their target was not transplanted Peruvians or Filipinos or Ethiopians, but Americans (or Canadians or ___)? How would you and/or your church respond? For some, this is not hypothetical; for others, it may not be long. How can you partner with them to advance the Gospel?
5. Aaron offered an analogy from baseball to describe missional activity: first base is getting to your destination, second base is learning the language, third base is making a disciple, and a home run—the real goal—is that disciple making a disciple. This illustration arises from the logic of the Great Commission. Read Matthew 28:18–20. What base are you standing on right now? At least second base, right? Is there anyone that you are actively trying to reach with the Gospel right now? Share the names of three non-Christian friends, co-workers, or neighbors. What can you do this week to show and/or share the mercy of Christ with them? Take time to pray for them together.

LESSON 3 | WALIT MASIHI!

6. What lessons did you learn about fear, faith, and risk through Said's testimony?
7. What differences between Christians and Muslims, and between the Gospel and the Quran, eventually brought Kamal to faith in Jesus? Consider your own context and the non-Christians you prayed for earlier. What are the key differences between the Gospel and their worldview? How can you exploit those differences to help bring them to faith in Jesus?

LESSON 4 | NEVER ONCE

8. Do you know how many non-English speakers live in your community? How many do not have a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent? How many describe themselves as having no religious affiliation? Thanks to modern technology, you can find out—right now! Grab your smartphone or tablet and find answers to these questions. What stands out to you? Did you learn anything you didn't expect? What needs exist in your community that you can leverage for Gospel advance?
9. What would you do if your children or spouse or parents were featured on an Islamic terrorist website? Describe your initial reaction to such news. How does the Gospel transform our response from fear and hatred to trust and love? Consider Romans 5:8, Hebrews 10:35-39, and 1 Peter 2:24 and 3:18.

LESSON 5 | "I LOVE THE INFANTRY."

10. As Aaron said, "Islam is just another façade for lost people who are trying to save themselves." Do Western Christians think of Islam this way? Why or why not? What façades do lost people in your neighborhood use to try to save themselves?
11. The Gospel Pilgrims risk their lives to pass on copies of the New Testament. Name at least five reasons that the distribution of the Scriptures is critical to Gospel advance. For each reason, think of a corresponding biblical text.