

UNSHAKABLE PURSUIT

EMPHASIS BOOK STUDY

Unshakable Pursuit: Chasing the God Who Chases Us

By Grace Thornton

Whether we realize it, we've all got an eternal momentum coursing through our veins. It's the momentum of the giant story we are all swept up in—the one in which the Creator of the universe chases us in love and invites us to chase Him back. It's the one that should pump courage and conviction through our veins to spend our lives taking the gospel to those who have never heard it.

But it's so easy to get trapped in the mundane. Let's face it. It just is.

That's why sitting at the feet of Paul in Acts 17:16–28 is so important—it can bring us back face-to-face with the way God is orchestrating every detail of our lives to help people all over the world find Him. And that's why it's vital that we remind ourselves of the stories of how God is doing that even now.

Unshakable Pursuit is a 30-day celebration of His story in our lives and His unfailing, overwhelming love for us. You can invite adults and students in your church and community to be a part of that journey through an event at your church.

Get Ready

Read *Unshakable Pursuit* to get a feel for the study. Over the 30 days, meditate on Acts 17:16–28 and 1 Corinthians 15:58 and on the truth that God has pursued you. Pray your event would be a place where people engage with their role in God's story—the one in which He's using us to pursue people all over the world with the hope of the gospel.

Get Set

- Consider making your event a Saturday brunch or a weekday evening study. Decide what food will be served. One possibility is to use a running theme to illustrate the “pursuit”—for example, you could decorate with running shoes or serve race-type snacks such as bananas, bagels, and power bars.

- Order copies of *Unshakable Pursuit* from wmustore.com/newhope to have on hand for giveaway or purchase.
- Enlist any help you might need setting up for the event, whether that be preparing food, setting up chairs, decorating, or storytelling (see program sections below).
- Plan for each of the four parts of the program to take about 15 minutes. Read the following for instructions on how to prepare for each part ahead of time, and then put them into practice on the day of the event. Prepare the prayer stations for Part 3.
- Begin publicizing the event at least a month beforehand, advertising it in your church newsletter and sharing it on social media.

Go

INTRODUCTION

▷ PREPARE ahead of time:

- Read *Unshakable Pursuit* and meditate on Acts 17:16–28.

▷ PRESENT on the day of the event:

- Begin by asking participants if they have ever looked at their own life and wondered what in the world God could be doing. Talk about how nothing in our lives is wasted. Remind participants that every detail is part of a path that will help us know God better and bring others to Him.
- Read Acts 17:16–28 and discuss how God orchestrates the paths of people all over the globe on purpose so that they might feel for Him and find Him. Talk about how that happened even to Paul (see Acts 9:1–19).

PART 1: He Chases Us

▷ PREPARE ahead of time:

- Ask someone to be your storyteller for Part 1, someone who would be willing to share his or her story of how God used unlikely things or circumstances to bring him or her to saving faith in Jesus. (Read Day 1 of *Unshakable Pursuit* for ideas and direction.)
- Have 3-by-5 cards and pens on hand.

▷ PRESENT on the day of the event:

- Invite your storyteller to share the story of his or her “oak tree” moment. (Or if you don’t have a storyteller, then share Evelyn’s story from Day 1 of *Unshakable Pursuit*.)
- After the story, give each person a 3-by-5 card and a pen. Ask participants to write down one way they have seen God use something in their lives to bring them to faith in Him—a situation, an illness, a tragedy, an influential person, an important decision, etc.
- Ask if anyone is willing to share briefly with the group what’s on his or her card. Allow 5–7 minutes for this part.
- Pray and thank God for the way He has pursued everyone in the room personally and how He removed the scales from their eyes to see Him for Who He is.

PART 2: We Chase Him Back

▷ PRESENT on the day of the event:

- Talk about how the fact that our lives are “normal” doesn’t mean they are meant to be mundane. Remind participants that even in the things we do every day, we can know God more and make Him known. Discuss how God’s purpose for us is to chase Him in everything from doing laundry to living through a crisis.
- Talk as a group about the importance of studying God’s Word and how that is the way God actively infuses the truth of Who He is and the momentum of eternity into our hearts. Ask participants to share ways they make time for the Word in the midst of life’s demands. Ask them to share how it changes them.

PART 3: We Join in His Pursuit of Others

▷ PREPARE ahead of time:

- Enlist a storyteller who can share a story of a divine appointment in his or her life when he or she met someone and shared Christ’s love.
- Set up prayer stations around the outskirts of the room: one for your local community, one for your state or nation, and one for the world. Use maps, photos, posters, or anything else you would like to use to illustrate the need. Provide cards or signs with ways to pray for the lost. Consider placing floor pillows or chairs at each station.

▷ PRESENT on the day of the event:

- Read or tell the story of Frank from Day 6 of *Unshakable Pursuit*. Talk about how incredible it is to know that this is the God we serve—the One Who prepares hearts and bends paths in such a fantastic way.
- Invite your storyteller to share his or her story of how God worked in an everyday situation to provide an opportunity to share the gospel.
- Talk about how God’s purpose is for us to be a part of His pursuit of others.
- End the event by inviting participants to divide up and move through the stations, praying for the lost in their neighborhoods and around the world. Encourage them to pray throughout the week for God to bring people across their paths who need Him and for them to have eyes to see the need and courage to be intentional.

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