ACTS

BIBLE STUDY

A Movement Ready Church

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Introduction to

THE BOOK OF ACTS

As the second volume in Luke's account of the life and mission of Jesus Christ, the Book of Acts chronicles the Holy Spirit's work in empowering Jesus's followers to carry out the Great Commission: to go into all the world and spread the gospel. Picking up where his first book, Luke, concludes—with Jesus's ascension into heaven—this narrative follows the explosive growth of the Church. True to its name, Acts is a book of activity and momentum, documenting the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem throughout the known world.

Luke was the only non-Jewish author of the New Testament, and he wrote in a style that gave credence to his educated status as a doctor. Although not one of the original disciples, he set aside his medical career to keep records for future generations and experience both the wonders and sufferings of missionary work as he traveled with the Apostle Paul.

What to look for in Acts

The **gospel** is explained in detail throughout this book. Acts presents a model of how to share the gospel with boldness and wisdom to a variety of audiences.

The power of the **Holy Spirit** is on display in Acts, and there is much for us to learn about His work in and through believers in Jesus from the first century to the present.

The growth and expansion of the **church** is described as the gospel went forth throughout the world. Acts reveals the good, bad, and the ugly of believers learning to live in unity as brothers and sisters in Christ who compose "the church."

Persecution serves to refine and propagate the spread of Christianity. This recurring theme in Acts demonstrates the expectation of persecution, as Paul states in 2 Timothy 3:12, "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

How to Study the Bible

This study employs a three-method approach to Bible study, although not always in this order.

Observation: Several questions will ask you to simply observe what is in the text. These straightforward questions aim to identify what the author is communicating and look at the text objectively. These questions typically ask what, when, where, how, or why.

Interpretation: You will also notice questions that determine the significance of what you have observed by asking, "What does this mean?" We will look at what the text teaches us about God and ourselves, and discover practical lessons and encouragement.

Application: The final, crucial step is to ask what you should do as a result of what you have studied. There is at least one application question per day. This is where study translates into personal transformation, which is the ultimate goal of reading God's Word. (see James 1:22)

Tips for Study

Plan your study time in advance. Set aside a consistent, distraction-free time each day with your Bible and lesson ready. Think of this as an appointment with God and make it a priority.

Pray! The Holy Spirit is your teacher. Ask for His help before you begin, and continue to pray as you go through the material that He will cement these truths in your mind and help you to act on them.

Focus on what you do understand. The Bible contains some difficult passages. If you feel confused, it's perfectly okay to skip a question and keep moving through the lesson.

Study in a group. These lessons are designed for group discussion. Focused discussion of God's Word helps you remember what you learned and benefits the entire group as you share insights.

Mark questions. As you study, highlight questions you want to discuss so you remember to bring them up during group time.

Sometimes questions include additional Scripture references. When **"see"** followed by a reference is in parentheses, look for the answer in those specific verses. When **"also see"** is in parentheses, find the answer by looking at both the daily reading and the additional references.

A final note of Encouragement

Studying God's Word is one of the most rewarding commitments you can make, and it is worth the time and effort! As you commit to this daily rhythm, and then put lessons learned into practice, expect your relationship with God to grow and your life to bear witness to the transformational power of the gospel.

The sower sows the word. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. (Mark 4:14 and 20)

WEEK 1 | DAY 1

Read Acts 1:1–2

Theophilus, whose name means "friend of God" or "beloved of God," may have been a pseudonym for the actual person to whom Luke dedicated his book. The title "most excellent" (Luke 1:3) indicates a high-ranking political position, and many scholars speculate that he was a financial patron of Luke's work. Although numerous theories have been proposed regarding the identity of Theophilus, it ultimately remains a mystery.

1. To better understand the author of this book, look at how the apostle Paul describes his traveling companion, Luke, in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 1:23–24.

2. According to Acts 1:1–2, what was the focus of Luke's first book, and what does the phrase "began to do and teach" imply?

3. The books of Luke and Acts are united as one overarching work of literature. Look back at Luke 1:1–4 to discover how Luke gathered his information and why he felt it necessary to write this account.

4. As you begin this study, think about your goals. Write down what you specifically hope to accomplish as you spend time digging into this book of the Bible. Realistically consider whether you are willing to dedicate the time and effort necessary to accomplish these goals.

MY RESPONSE

Use the space below to write a prayer expressing your commitment to God, asking for His help to fulfill it.

WEEK 1 | DAY 2

Read Acts 1:1–5

1. How long did Jesus remain on earth after His resurrection, and what did He do during that time?

2. Give several reasons why the infallible proofs of Jesus's resurrection were absolutely vital to the Christian faith.

   Romans 8:11

   1 Corinthians 15:14–19

   Ephesians 1:18–20

3. Recount Jesus's instructions to His chosen apostles prior to His ascension. What could they expect, and what lessons might they learn while waiting?

4. This was not the first time Jesus had promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His disciples. Record the details Jesus shared about this gift just prior to His death in John 14:16–17 and 16:5–16.

MY RESPONSE

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth... (John 16:13)
Compose a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to open your mind to His truth and transform your heart as He teaches you through the book of Acts.

WEEK 1 | DAY 3

Before you begin your study, review your prayer at the end of Day 2 and pause to ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth.

Read Acts 1:6–8

1. What was the disciples' hope now that Jesus had risen from the dead, and what did Jesus's reply redirect their focus and expectations?

2. Define a witness. Think about the significance of God choosing human followers to spread the gospel (John 15:27) rather than using other means.

3. Describe the scope and geographic progression of Jesus's mandate. Was this task intended only for the original disciples? Why or why not? (also see Matthew 28:18–20)

4. Identify the source of power to fulfill Jesus's command and consider why that is necessary. From the verses below, list several specific ways the Holy Spirit equips believers.

Luke 12:11–12

John 14:26

John 16:8

1 Corinthians 2:4–5

1 Corinthians 2:12–14

Titus 3:5

MY RESPONSE

How are you personally participating in the mission Jesus outlined in these verses? What practical step will you take this week to obey His command?

WEEK 1 | DAY 4

Read Acts 1:9–14

1. Write several observations about Jesus's ascension. (also see similar accounts in Mark 16:19–20; Luke 24:50–53)

2. Read Exodus 40:34. How does this passage help explain what the cloud represented as Jesus was taken up to heaven?

3. Why was Jesus's ascension so important for believers according to John 16:7, Romans 8:34, and Hebrews 4:14–16?

4. How will Jesus's return from heaven be similar to His ascension? In what ways will it be different? (see Luke 12:40, 21:27; 1 Thessalonians 4:16–17; Revelation 1:7)

5. Upon their return to the city of Jerusalem, who was present in the upper room and what were they doing? (also see Luke 24:52–53) How could you follow their example while you wait for God's promises to be fulfilled in your life?

MY RESPONSE

Read Luke 18:1. Write a prayer regarding what you are currently waiting for.

WEEK 1 | DAY 5

Read Acts 1:15–26

The disciples had an important matter to attend to as they prayerfully awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit.

1. Peter detailed the tragic end of Judas's life. Review his betrayal, and note what stands out to you.

   Psalm 41:9

   Matthew 26:14–16, 47–49

   Matthew 27:1–10

2. What is the significance of Peter recounting the prophecies about Judas from the book of Psalms?

3. Record the qualifications of the one who would replace Judas and the elements involved in the selection process.

4. Read Proverbs 16:33. Casting lots, as used by the disciples in Acts 1, was a common practice for determining God's will in the Old Testament. Is this method of making decisions descriptive (how they did it) or prescriptive (how we should do it), and why?

5. Review the first chapter of Acts and record the truths it teaches about each member of the Trinity–God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

MY RESPONSE

List one or two main truths you learned from this chapter. What impact do they have on your life?

WEEK 2 | DAY 1

Read Acts 2:1–4

Pentecost (from the Greek word for "fiftieth") came 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits which occurred on the Sunday during the Passover week. This celebration had been observed since the time of Moses as the Feast of Weeks—one of the primary festivals commanded by God. New meaning was given to this celebration after Jesus's death and resurrection, as the coming of the Holy Spirit ushered in the Church Age.

1. What do you learn about the purpose and instructions surrounding this feast from Leviticus 23:15–21?

2. List several observations from Acts 2:1–4: who was present, what they were doing, the sights and sounds, and the spiritual reality.

3. How did the symbols of wind (the same word for "breath" in both Greek and Hebrew) and fire provide greater understanding of the Holy Spirit?

   Ezekiel 37:9–10

   Exodus 13:21–22

   John 3:5–8

   Luke 3:16–17

   John 20:21–22

   1 Thessalonians 5:19

4. With the added context from the above question, re-read verses 1-4. Contemplate the purpose of the immediate and unmistakable signs of the Holy Spirit's coming. Record your thoughts.

MY RESPONSE

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, how have you recently experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?

WEEK 2 | DAY 2

Read Acts 2:4–13

1. Describe the group of people who gathered in Jerusalem. What was their experience?

2. Who was responsible for the message being delivered (verse 4), and what was the message the disciples shared?

3. How did John's vision of heaven in Revelation 7:9–10 relate to this account?

4. Read the accusation made by some in the crowd in Acts 2:13. From Ephesians 5:18, what parallels can you draw between being filled with wine and the filling of the Spirit?

5. What do you learn about the gift of the Holy Spirit from 1 Corinthians 12:12–13 and Ephesians 1:13–14?

6. For a deeper dive: Contrast the event in Genesis 11:1–9 with the event of Pentecost. What insights do you draw?

MY RESPONSE

Write a prayer of thanksgiving for God's truth being available in your own language.

WEEK 2 | DAY 3

Read Acts 2:14–24

1. How had the Holy Spirit completely changed Peter from the man he had been just weeks earlier? (see Luke 22:54–62)

2. How did Joel's prophecy demonstrate the inclusivity and invitation of the outpouring of God's Spirit?

3. In your own words, outline the truths Peter explained regarding the purpose and work of Jesus's ministry on earth.

4. How did divine sovereignty and human responsibility intersect in Jesus's crucifixion? For a deeper dive: what are some theological implications of this relationship?

MY RESPONSE

Read Romans 8:28 and Hebrews 12:2. How does Jesus's victory over death give you courage and hope in your current struggles?

WEEK 2 | DAY 4

Read Acts 2:25–41

1. As one of the most revered figures in Israel's history, David penned prophecies concerning the coming Messiah that held great interest for the Jewish crowd. What was Peter's main point in verses 25–31?

2. Where is Jesus today according to verses 33–35, and why is that important? (see Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25, 10:12; 1 Peter 3:22)

3. How did Peter's targeted use of the Old Testament help him articulate the truth of the gospel to his Jewish audience? How did a simple fisherman become confident in interpreting Scripture? (see Mark 12:35–37; Luke 24:27; John 5:39)

4. Referencing Luke 8:8–15 John 16:7–8, and Hebrews 4:12, how do you explain the astonishing response of the people in verse 37?

5. List several applications you can glean from Peter's example regarding sharing the gospel with others.

MY RESPONSE

The miraculous signs at Pentecost prepared hearts to hear the truth of the gospel. What did God use (or is He currently using) to prepare your heart to understand your need for a Savior?

WEEK 2 | DAY 5

Read Acts 2:37–47

1. For those who responded to his message, list the steps Peter urged the people to take, and what they could expect to receive. To whom was this invitation available?

2. Peter spoke with conviction and urgency in his call for the people to repent and be saved. Why is urgency necessary when communicating to others about the need for salvation?

3. After they received his word, what was the first act of obedience taken by the 3,000 new converts? What does this act symbolize? (see Romans 6:3–4, 11; Colossians 2:12)

4. Describe the close community that was formed by the new believers. How were various areas of life affected by their newfound faith?

5. Unity in the early church was foundational. Why is this same level of oneness so rare to see in the Church today? What in your participation with the church mirrors the early believers, and what is God calling you to adjust?

MY RESPONSE

As you think about your mental, emotional, and physical energy, what are you devoted to? What adjustment will you make this week to more closely resemble the early believers in their wholehearted devotion?

WEEK 3 | DAY 1

Read Acts 3:1–10

1. List several observations about this story.

2. As a medical doctor, what details did Luke find necessary to point out about the man's physical condition?

3. What striking detail do you find in verse 7 that Peter and John had previously observed their Rabbi do. What insights do you have about this? (see Mark 5:41, 8:23, 9:27)

4. What did the man ask to receive from Peter and John versus the extravagant blessing he actually received? Why do you think he did not ask for more? What keeps you from making bold requests of God?

5. What was the man's immediate response to his healing? What is your typical response to unforeseen blessings in your life?

MY RESPONSE

You do not have because you do not ask God. (James 4:2b) Spend time praising God for an answered prayer, and pray for something that only He could accomplish. Challenge yourself to tell someone about a prayer God has answered in your life or a way you see God at work.

WEEK 3 | DAY 2

Read Acts 3:1–16

1. How did the people respond to the event at the temple? What do you imagine you would be thinking if you were part of the crowd?

2. What do you notice about the credit given for this extraordinary miracle?

3. Read verse 6 again. What truths do you find in the following verses about the power of Jesus's name?

   Proverbs 18:10

   Luke 10:17

   John 14:13

   Romans 10:13

   1 Corinthians 6:11

   Philippians 2:9–11

4. More than simply invoking a powerful name, what does verse 16 assert was necessary for the healing to occur?

5. What unmistakable connection did Peter establish between the healing of the lame man and Jesus's death and resurrection?

MY RESPONSE

How has God healed you—relationally, spiritually, physically, or emotionally? Write your prayer of praise for what He has done in your life.

WEEK 3 | DAY 3

Read Acts 3:9–18

1. As the curious crowd gathered, what became evident about the greater purpose of the miraculous healing?

2. List the names of God that Peter recounted and what each name signifies.

3. What sobering responsibility did Peter lay on the men of Israel? Did God's foreknowledge absolve them of blame?

4. As witnesses, what foundational truths had Peter and John learned about God and His purposes, and how did their firsthand account lend compelling credibility to their words?

5. Peter claimed the Jews had acted in ignorance (also see 1 Corinthians 2:8). Based on the verses below, does ignorance excuse sin, and what difference does it make?

   Leviticus 5:17–19

   Luke 12:47–48

   Romans 1:20

MY RESPONSE

Peter used this situation as an opportunity to give testimony to Jesus's saving power. What has God done in your life that you might use as an introduction to His saving grace?

WEEK 3 | DAY 4

Read Acts 3:17–26

1. In verses 18 and 24, Peter demonstrated how the ancient Jewish prophets predicted the suffering of the Messiah. What remarkable details do you find in the following passages, which were written several hundred years before Jesus was born?

   Psalm 22:1, 14–18

   Isaiah 53

   Zechariah 12:10

2. From verse 19, what is the remedy for the problem of sin, and why is this such an essential component of salvation?

3. What are the results of repentance according to these verses?

   Ezekiel 18:27–28

   Luke 15:7

   Acts 3:19–20

   2 Corinthians 7:10

MY RESPONSE

If you have found forgiveness in Christ through repentance of your sins, share what that means to you and the difference that it makes in your life.

WEEK 3 | DAY 5

Read Acts 3:17–26

1. Hundreds of years before Christ, God's prophets spoke of the coming restoration of all things. What do you learn about this glorious time, and how did the miracle the crowd had witnessed foreshadow this future reality?

   Isaiah 35:1–7

   Romans 8:20–23

2. Quoting from Deuteronomy 18, who was the prophet Moses predicted, and what was the severe result for those who rejected him? (also see Luke 24:19–20; Hebrews 2:3)

3. From Genesis 12:1–3, list God's promised blessing to Abram, the father of the Jews, who was later renamed Abraham. To whom did these blessings extend and how were these promises being fulfilled?

4. Think about the specific benefits of living a life of righteousness. How is turning from wickedness a blessing (verse 26)?

MY RESPONSE

As "sons of the prophets and the covenant," the Jews were the first to be given the chance to recognize and believe in the Messiah. What resources has God given you to understand Jesus, and what have you done with that privilege?

WEEK 4 | DAY 1

Read Acts 4:1–7

1. Who was annoyed at Peter's preaching and why? (also see Luke 20:27) What underlying reasons do you think cause people to find the gospel offensive?

2. From verses 1–4, describe the vastly different results of Peter's preaching. What do you learn from this?

3. Who led the charge against Peter and John the next day, and what do you learn about them from the following verses?

   John 18:12–14 and 24

   Matthew 26:57–67

4. What question did the high priestly family demand to know, and what do you imagine was going through the minds of Peter and John as they were being questioned?

MY RESPONSE

List insights or principles you can learn from the examples (either positive or negative) in this part of Scripture.

WEEK 4 | DAY 2

Read Acts 4:5–12

1. The religious leaders inquired about the source of authority for the healing. How did Jesus respond to a similar question in Matthew 21:23–27?

2. What was Peter's main purpose in his defense before the rulers who had put Jesus to death?

3. How do the following verses describe what it means for Jesus to be the cornerstone?

   Isaiah 28:16–17

   Ephesians 2:19–22

4. How does Acts 4:12 explain the exclusivity of the gospel? (also see John 14:6) How would you respond to someone who asserts that all religions eventually lead to the same place?

MY RESPONSE

Write Acts 4:12 below and work on committing it to memory.

WEEK 4 | DAY 3

Read Acts 4:13–22

1. The boldness of the disciples was evident and indisputable. To what was this attributed, and why do you think that was the case?

2. How are you encouraged by the following verses?

   Psalm 138:3

   Proverbs 28:1

   2 Corinthians 3:12

   Ephesians 3:11–12

   Hebrews 13:6

3. What dilemma did the religious leaders face?

4. Peter and John were commanded to no longer speak in Jesus's name. How is their uncompromising response an example to you? In what situations today might this type of response be necessary?

5. List the different characters in this narrative and the factors that influenced their choices. Which of these factors typically influence your decisions?

MY RESPONSE

Read verse 13 again. What is the evidence to those you interact with that you have spent time with Jesus?

WEEK 4 | DAY 4

Read Acts 4:23–31

1. There is much to learn from how the early believers responded to their first encounter with opposition. Record principles you glean from their example and their reaction to the threats they received. (also see 1 Corinthians 12:26)

2. What components of prayer do you find in the one recorded for us in verses 24–30?

3. What understanding about God did their prayer reveal, and how would that powerful reminder help them in their current situation?

4. Read Psalm 2, which the believers quoted in this prayer. How did this psalm of David apply to their current context? (list phrases with verse numbers)

5. What did the believers request for themselves? Is there anything you find surprising about what they did not request in their prayer?

6. How would you describe the difference between the original baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 and the subsequent filling described in Acts 4:8 and 31?

MY RESPONSE

Prayer is depicted repeatedly in Acts as the key to spiritual power. What does your prayer life reveal about what you truly believe prayer can accomplish?

WEEK 4 | DAY 5

Read Acts 4:32–37

Notice the connection between the fervent prayer in Acts 4:23–31 and this section.

1. List words to describe this group of Jesus followers. How do these characteristics play out in a biblical church today?

2. What evidence do you find of the work of the Holy Spirit in their midst? (see Acts 1:8; Ephesians 4:3–4; 2 Timothy 1:7)

3. As new believers in Jesus, how did their faith impact their view of material possessions, and why do you think this was true? (also see 1 Chronicles 29:12–15; 2 Corinthians 9:6–11)

4. Note everything you learn about the man introduced in verses 36–37.

5. How could you contribute to this type of unity in your church?

MY RESPONSE

Have material things lost some of their allure since following Jesus? What does your connection to your possessions reveal about your devotion to God?

WEEK 5 | DAY 1

Read Acts 5:1–11

The generosity of Barnabas apparently inspired others to follow suit.

1. Explain the sin Ananias and Sapphira committed. What do you think they hoped to gain?

2. What does the Bible teach about the sins of deception and hypocrisy? Review the following passages.

   Proverbs 6:16–19

   Matthew 6:1–4

   Ephesians 4:25

   Colossians 3:9

   James 3:14

3. If you struggle with absolute truthfulness, what other hidden sins are often at the root?

4. What was the underlying reality of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira (verse 3 and 9) and why do you think God judged it so severely?

5. What were the results of this startling incident with Ananias and Sapphira?

MY RESPONSE

Proverbs 16:2 says, "motives are weighed by the Lord." Evaluate your own motives in giving, serving, or the good deeds you do. What does proper motivation look like and how can you develop it?

WEEK 5 | DAY 2

Read Acts 5:12–16

1. Satan always attempts to thwart a movement of God. What tactics had he tried to this point in the story of the early church?

2. From verses 12–16, describe the unique circumstances surrounding the early church and the differing responses of the people.

3. Notice that women were included in the list of recent converts, the mention of which was a stark cultural anomaly in a male-dominated society. How was Christianity beginning to change longstanding cultural perspectives? (see Galatians 3:28)

4. Re-visit the believers' prayer in Acts 4:29–30. What was the desired outcome of this request, and how was it answered?

MY RESPONSE

Read Job 42:2. What situation in your life feels like Satan might be gaining the upper hand? How will you trust that God's purposes prevail despite opposition?

WEEK 5 | DAY 3

Read Acts 5:17–21

1. Think about the profound disruption the apostles were generating to the status quo. What was the response of the religious leaders, and what caused that response?

2. Once again, tension escalated from threats to incarceration. Explain how the apostles were released from jail. What irony do you find in God's method of rescue given that it was the Sadducees who led the council? (also see Acts 23:8)

4. Expound on what the angel commanded the apostles to teach, drawing from Matthew 25:46, John 6:51 and 14:6, and Romans 5:18.

5. In your study so far, what do you notice about the apostles' obedience or lack thereof? (also see Acts 5:29) How does their example inspire you?

MY RESPONSE

When facing challenges, are you more likely to look for miraculous deliverance, or concentrate on your next step of obedience? Expound on your answer.

WEEK 5 | DAY 4

Read Acts 5:17–32

1. Reflect on the thoughts and emotions of the religious leaders when they learned the apostles were free and preaching again. What seemed to be driving them?

2. Of what did the high priest accuse the apostles, and how did the apostles turn that accusation around in verses 28–30? (also see Matthew 27:24–26)

3. Examine the implications of the choice of words used to describe Christ's death in verse 30.

   Exodus 20:13

   Deuteronomy 21:22-23

4. What did the apostles indicate is the significance of Jesus's position at the right hand of God?

5. What else do you learn about Jesus's current exalted position?

   Psalm 110:1

   Mark 14:62

   Ephesians 1:19–23

   1 Peter 3:22

MY RESPONSE

As you look over the questions above, what in this passage personally impacts your life?

WEEK 5 | DAY 5

Read Acts 5:29–42

1. Even in his scathing indictment of the religious leaders, what gracious invitation was extended in verse 31 and to whom was it offered? (see 2 Corinthians 7:10; 2 Peter 3:9)

2. What important truths about the Holy Spirit did Peter reiterate in verse 32?

3. As a murderous plot was formed, how was the Pharisee Gamaliel instrumental in tempering their fury? Summarize and evaluate his argument.

4. After a brutal lashing and strict warning, how did the apostles' response give evidence to their undivided purpose?

5. A few decades later, Peter wrote from painful experience about suffering in his letter. List key phrases or ideas from 1 Peter 3:13–17, 4:12–16, and 5:8–11.

MY RESPONSE

From Peter's teaching in the question above, write a prayer for those you know or those around the world who are suffering acutely for their testimony for Jesus Christ.

WEEK 6 | DAY 1

Read Acts 6:1–7

Recall how Acts 4 records the new believers selling their possessions and giving the proceeds to the apostles to distribute so that no one among them had needs.

1. What "good" problem led to the issue at hand? Where have you witnessed God's blessing bring about unexpected challenges?

2. While there was a legitimate concern, grumbling was not the solution. What is God's posture toward complaining?

   Exodus 16:8

   Numbers 11:1

   Philippians 2:14–15

   James 5:9

3. Rather than the Hellenists complaining about the Hebrews, what would have been a more constructive course of action?

4. Widows have always been close to the heart of God (see Psalm 68:5). How does this passage in Acts highlight God's design for the church to be a conduit of care for both physical and spiritual needs? (see Galatians 6:2; 1 Corinthians 12:25–26)

MY RESPONSE

Pray for a widow or widower in your life. Then reach out by text, a card, or an act of encouragement. Write down what you plan to do.

WEEK 6 | DAY 2

Read Acts 6:1–7

1. Record the practical steps the apostles took to address the matter at hand, and explain why each step was important.

2. What was the primary calling of the apostles? (also see Ephesians 4:11–12) What problems would have resulted if they had allowed themselves to be distracted from this role?

3. What characteristics did the apostles look for in choosing men who would serve? In contrast, what do churches sometimes look for in leaders that do not line up with these qualities?

4. Although the servants in Acts 6 were not given a formal title, Paul later outlined their role explicitly. From 1 Timothy 3:8–13, record character traits for those who serve the church in practical ways.

5. What was the result of the apostles' plan, and how did each group contribute to the continued unity of the church?

MY RESPONSE

Conflicts are inevitable in any group of people. How is this passage an example to you, and what is your role in minimizing distraction or disunity in your local church?

WEEK 6 | DAY 3

Read Acts 6:7–15

1. What group was coming to faith in Christ in verse 7, and why was this surprising given the opposition faced by the believers?

2. What words are used in verse 7 to describe the growth of the church, and through what means were people brought to faith?

3. Describe the transformational power of God's Word.

   Romans 10:17

   James 1:21

   2 Timothy 3:14–17

   1 Peter 1:23

4. In your own words, what kind of man was Stephen? (also see Acts 6:5)

MY RESPONSE

Craft a prayer for yourself and those in your community to grow in their love for and commitment to the Word of God.

WEEK 6 | DAY 4

Read Acts 6:8–15

1. When adversaries came against Stephen, how does Paul's explanation in 1 Corinthians 2:1–5 help you understand why they were unable to withstand his wisdom? (also see Luke 21:13–15)

2. How did Stephen's opponents plot to arrest him, and what specific accusations did they make? (also see Leviticus 24:16)

3. What striking similarities do you find between the treatment of Stephen and Jesus? (see Matthew 26:59–60)

4. From John 2:18–21, explain the context of the statement Jesus made that Stephen's accusers charged him with repeating.

5. How does the story of Moses in Exodus 34:29–30 give clues as to why Stephen's face looked the way it did?

MY RESPONSE

Stephen, the faithful servant, received unfair treatment for speaking truth. Write a prayer for those around the world who speak boldly for Christ despite fierce opposition.

WEEK 6 | DAY 5

1. Persecution would not have come as a surprise to the disciples who had spent so much time with Jesus. How had Jesus prepared his disciples for persecution?

	Warnings	Instructions	Promises & Encouragement
Matthew 5:10–12			
Matthew 16:24–27 and Mark 8:34–38			
Mark 13:9–13			
John 15:18–20 and 26–27			
John 16:1–4 and 33			
Luke 22:63–65 and 23:32–34			

2. How did the disciples adopt such a remarkable attitude toward persecution? (see Acts 5:41–42)

MY RESPONSE

Reflect on 2 Timothy 3:12. Have you considered the personal cost as well as the rewards of following Christ?

WEEK 7 | DAY 1

Read Acts 7:1–16

Rather than personally defending himself against the charges, Stephen masterfully used Israel's history to demonstrate God's unrestricted presence, the nation's continual pattern of rebellion, and their ultimate need for a Savior.

1. What tone did Stephen set by the way he addressed the hostile crowd of fellow Jews, and what do you learn from this?

2. List key points from Stephen's address about Abraham and how he interacted with God.

3. What type of example is Abraham to us today? (also see Hebrews 11:11–19)

4. Contrast Joseph with his brothers. How would you describe the difference?

5. List all the characteristics of God you can find in this portion of Stephen's speech.

MY RESPONSE

If future generations were able to look back at your life, what would give evidence to your faith?

WEEK 7 | DAY 2

Read Acts 7:17–36

1. What promise was God going to fulfill to Abraham? (see Acts 7:6–7) What does this teach you about God?

2. Read Numbers 23:19, Joshua 21:45, and Hebrews 10:23. How does embracing the truth of these verses change the way you live today?

3. What growth was necessary in Moses to prepare him to lead God's people?

4. How was God's sovereign control demonstrated?

5. Record enduring biblical principles you find in this passage.

MY RESPONSE

Take one of the principles you found above and put it into an actionable step. What will you do and when will you do it?

WEEK 7 | DAY 3

Read Acts 7:37–50

1. How did Stephen use Moses's words to point the religious establishment toward Jesus while also refuting the accusations of Acts 6:11–14?

2. What pattern was revealed about Israel's initial response to God's chosen leaders in both Moses and Joseph? (review Acts 7:9)

3. How was Stephen setting the stage to explain the Jews' response to Jesus? (also see John 1:10–11)

4. What sinful tendencies did Stephen emphasize in Israel's history?

5. What do you learn about true or false worship and how God responds to it?

MY RESPONSE

As you read about God's interactions with people from history, what similarities do you see in your own heart? Compose a prayer incorporating your thoughts.

WEEK 7 | DAY 4

Read Acts 7:1–50

1. Go back through chapter 7 and list all the physical places God's presence was manifested.

2. Looking back over roughly 2,000 years of Israel's history, how did Stephen highlight their great need for a Savior?

3. How did Stephen showcase God's relentless pursuit of His people?

4. What other themes do you find in this speech?

5. How did Paul spotlight the unique privilege of the people of Israel from Romans 9:4–5?

MY RESPONSE

What spiritual privileges have you received, and what will you do with them, knowing that to whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48)?

WEEK 7 | DAY 5

Read Acts 7:51–60

1. Upon completing his history lesson, describe Stephen's assessment of the crowd in your own words.

2. How did the religious leaders act just like their rebellious ancestors? (also see Exodus 32:9; Deuteronomy 10:16; Luke 13:34)

3. Describe Stephen's remarkable inner and outward experience as he was being stoned to death.

4. How did Stephen mirror the perfect example of Christ as he was killed? (see Luke 23:34, 46) What insight does this give you into his heart?

5. What type of reception was Stephen given in heaven? (also see Matthew 10:32; Revelation 2:10)

MY RESPONSE

Throughout Acts, we see vastly different responses to truth. What are some of those responses? What is your typical response when truth is shared and how would you like to grow in this area?

WEEK 8 | DAY 1

Read Acts 8:1–8

1. What does Saul's introduction (also in 7:58) reveal about the type of man he was?

2. As if a dam had broken, the animosity that had been welling up overflowed in mass persecution. In the midst of their deep grief, what was the immediate effect of persecution on the believers, and how did this align with God's sovereign plan? (see Acts 1:8)

3. Recalling that Philip was chosen as one of the seven (Acts 6) who worked alongside Stephen, describe his ministry in Samaria and the effect it had.

4. What would it have taken for Philip and others to continue to spread the gospel despite the obvious risks?

5. Why did the city in Samaria experience such joy? (also see Romans 15:13; Galatians 5:22–23; 1 Peter 1:6–9)

6. Thoughtfully read Romans 8:28 and 2 Corinthians 4:17–18. How do these verses give enhanced perspective on persecution?

MY RESPONSE

Think about a current trial you are experiencing and the eternal good that it can produce. Write a prayer thanking God in faith for what He will accomplish through this trial.

WEEK 8 | DAY 2

Read Acts 8:4–17

Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, was conquered by Assyria in 722 BC. Its inhabitants were deported, and those who remained intermarried with foreigners who repopulated the region. Mainstream Jews held an intense prejudice against Samaritans. (see John 4:9)

1. Signs and wonders were not new to Samaria. Contrast the signs and wonders the people witnessed from Simon and Philip in terms of the source of power, the glory attributed, and the ultimate outcome. (also see 2 Thessalonians 2:9–10)

2. Why were they misled, and how can people today distinguish between true and false signs? (see 1 Corinthians 2:12–13; 1 John 4:1–3)

3. From Exodus 22:18, Deuteronomy 18:9–12, Galatians 5:19–21 and Revelation 21:8, what is God's uncompromising view of sorcery?

4. What happened when the Samaritans were exposed to the gospel and related miracles?

5. For a deeper dive: As the gospel spread to a new region, God worked in a unique way through the ministry of Peter and John in verses 14–17. Explain the atypical delay in the Samaritans receiving the Holy Spirit. (also see Matthew 16:17–19; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26–28; Ephesians 4:3–6)

MY RESPONSE

Think about your first exposure to the true gospel message. What was your response?

WEEK 8 | DAY 3

Read Acts 8:9–25

1. Referencing Luke 9:51–54, how had God worked in John's heart toward the Samaritans? To what do you attribute the change, and have you recognized a similar change in your life toward a person or group of people since following Christ?

2. Though Simon recognized the power of the Holy Spirit and was baptized, what ulterior motives did his actions prove?

3. Explain how someone can say they believe and be baptized, yet not truly belong to Christ. (also see Matthew 15:7–9; James 2:19)

4. What was Peter's stern evaluation of Simon? (also see Deuteronomy 29:18; Hebrews 12:15)

5. Read verses 20–24 again. What did Peter tell Simon to do, and what did Simon want? Is it possible for a person to secure God's forgiveness on another person's behalf? (see 1 Timothy 2:5–6; 1 John 2:1)

6. Why was it important that Peter exposed the true spiritual condition of Simon's heart?

MY RESPONSE

With so many voices vying for attention, write a prayer asking God for discernment and a firm commitment to biblical truth.

WEEK 8 | DAY 4

Read Acts 8:26–40

1. Record observations about how Philip was guided in this passage and his immediate response. Why might leaving Samaria have been difficult to do?

2. As a eunuch, this man would be denied entrance into the assembly of Jews (see Deuteronomy 23:1). Describe the eunuch's spiritual condition when Philip first encountered him.

3. What lessons can you learn about sharing the gospel with others from Philip's example?

4. What do the following verses teach about the importance of speaking to share the gospel?

   Romans 10:14–17

   2 Timothy 4:2

   1 Peter 3:15

MY RESPONSE

What excuses do you use for not sharing the truth of the gospel with others? Confess that to the Lord and ask for help where you need it. Pray for an opportunity to share the gospel today.

WEEK 8 | DAY 5

Read Acts 8:26–40

1. Far from being coincidental circumstances, list several ways God's Spirit directed this providential encounter of Philip and the eunuch.

2. How did the passage the eunuch was reading from Isaiah 53 point to Christ?

3. What specific hope was available for the eunuch from that same book in Isaiah 56:3–8?

4. Although verse 37–in which the eunuch confessed belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God–is absent from the earliest manuscripts and omitted from modern translations, what textual evidence proves his genuine conversion?

5. Contrast the heart posture of Simon with that of the eunuch, and the differing results once they were confronted with the gospel.

6. What was the significance of an African, Gentile, eunuch being baptized into the church?

MY RESPONSE

Read Revelation 7:9. Compose a prayer of thanksgiving for the universal invitation of the gospel.

WEEK 9 | DAY 1

Read Acts 9:1–9

1. How would you describe Saul's hostility against followers of "the Way?"

2. What sensations, emotions, and circumstances surrounded Saul's encounter with the living Jesus?

3. What did Jesus's questions and statements indicate about His close identification with His followers?

4. Contrast how Saul expected to enter Damascus with how he actually arrived.

5. How do the following verses (the latter two written by Paul/Saul) flesh out themes of spiritual blindness and conversion?

   Isaiah 42:16

   2 Corinthians 4:6

   John 12:46

   Colossians 1:12–14

MY RESPONSE

How was God's grace showcased in His pursuit of Saul? How is God's grace showcased in His pursuit of you?

WEEK 9 | DAY 2

Read Acts 9:10–19

1. As a strict Pharisee, Saul would have prayed regularly. What would have been different about Saul's prayers now? What do you imagine they included?

2. Putting yourself in Ananias's position, what would it have taken to obey God's command? What would cause his understandable reluctance?

3. How did God deliver His message to Ananias, and what important details did this message include?

4. What do you learn from the way Ananias obeyed? How did it display faith? What did he gain through his obedience?

5. How did the removal of Saul's physical blindness correspond to his new spiritual sight? (also see John 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:4)

6. Identify the significance of each action taken upon Saul's sight being restored.

MY RESPONSE

God can redeem anyone from anything at any time. Do you truly believe this? If so, what is the evidence of this belief in the way you pray or share with others?

WEEK 9 | DAY 3

Read Acts 9:20–22

1. How did Saul's bold testimony in Damascus prove the genuineness of his newfound faith? How does his concise message guide you in talking with people of other faiths?

2. God redirected Saul's intense zeal from destroying the church to building it up. How does this encourage or challenge you regarding the specific personality and temperament God has given you?

3. How did people respond to Saul's preaching?

4. Read Galatians 1:11–20 for Saul's personal reflection on his conversion. What additional details and insights do you find regarding his early days of following Christ?

MY RESPONSE

In what specific ways has your life changed since you began following Christ? If you surrendered to Jesus as a young child and don't have a radical "before and after" story, how are you currently growing to look more like Him today?

WEEK 9 | DAY 4

Read Acts 9:23–31

1. After time in Arabia, Saul returned to Damascus. How did God's message to Ananias in Acts 9:16 begin to come to fulfillment, and how did God protect Saul? (also see 2 Corinthians 11:32–33)

2. When Saul arrived in Jerusalem he immediately tried to join the disciples. Why is connecting with a local body of believers crucial after conversion? (also see Hebrews 10:23–25)

3. Barnabas's name means "son of encouragement" (Acts 4:36). How would you characterize his vital role in bridging the gap between Saul and a fearful church?

4. What stands out about Saul's witness for Christ?

5. Identify key aspects of the time of growth and peace the believers enjoyed. How should we respond in times like these?

MY RESPONSE

Think about how your community of believers receives newcomers or those with messy backgrounds. What practical step will you take to be a "Barnabas" to someone this week?

WEEK 9 | DAY 5

Read Acts 9:32–43

1. As Peter traveled about, Dr. Luke highlighted his interest in the medical realm. What stands out to you about the healing of Aeneas in verses 32–35? Compare this text to Jesus's healing of a paralytic in Mark 2:8–11.

2. How did the life and sudden death of Tabitha (Dorcas) impact her local community?

3. Compare the raising of Tabitha to the raising of Jairus' daughter in Mark 5:35–43. What specific similarities do you see, and what does this teach us about Peter's desire to model his ministry exactly after his Rabbi, Jesus?

4. What were the results of these two miracles?

5. The mention of Peter's choice of lodging was significant. Tanners worked regularly with dead animals, making them perpetually ceremonially unclean under Jewish law. (see Leviticus 11:24, 39) What does Peter's willingness to stay with Simon suggest?

MY RESPONSE

Consider the variety of ways God used to draw people to Himself in the book of Acts. What does this teach you about God? Write a prayer praising Him for how He drew you to Himself.

WEEK 10 | DAY 1

Read Acts 10:1–22

1. How does the text describe Cornelius? List everything you find.

2. What commendation did the angel give to Cornelius, and what was he commanded to do?

3. Acts 10 was a defining moment in church history. Notice that God spoke to Peter while he was spending intentional time in prayer (verse 9). Use the following verses to explain the importance of a regular, vibrant prayer life.

   Psalm 145:18

   Hebrews 4:16

   Matthew 26:41

   James 4:8 and 5:16

   Philippians 4:6–7

   1 John 5:14–15

4. Take a moment to evaluate your own prayer life. How often do you typically pray and what topics tend to dominate your prayers? After reading the verses above, what do you feel led to pray about more?

MY RESPONSE

Set a timer for 10 minutes, put away distractions, and simply spend time talking to God about the things you wrote above.

WEEK 10 | DAY 2

Read Acts 10:9–23

1. Skim Leviticus 11, paying close attention to verses 43–47. Explain the bizarre vision Peter received while his lunch was being prepared, and why he reacted so strongly.

2. What massive spiritual shift was taking place, and what reassurance did God give Peter that he was not imagining it?

3. Reflect on the providential timing of the unfolding events and Peter's sensitivity to the Spirit.

4. What do you think prepared Peter to pivot his lifelong thinking and obey the Spirit so quickly?

5. Mark 7:1–23 records how Jesus had introduced this concept to His disciples, although they didn't comprehend it at the time. From verses 14–23, what is it that truly makes all of us "unclean?"

MY RESPONSE

Are you moldable to a new plan God may have for you, or do you tend to rigidly hold on to what is comfortable, familiar, or traditional?

WEEK 10 | DAY 3

Read Acts 10:23–43

1. How did Cornelius prepare for Peter's arrival in verses 24 and 33, and what did it indicate about his expectations of what God would do?

2. How did Peter demonstrate that he and Cornelius were on equal footing?

3. What unprecedented spiritual breakthrough did Peter communicate to the assembled group (verses 34–35)? According to Deuteronomy 10:17, was this a new reality?

4. How do the following verses clarify that the gracious inclusion of all nations was God's intention from the beginning?

   Genesis 12:1–3

   Isaiah 2:2

   Psalm 67:1-2

5. How did God use Israel to bring this precious gift of salvation to all people? (also see Isaiah 49:6; Romans 1:16; Galatians 4:4–5; Ephesians 1:12)

MY RESPONSE

Cornelius displayed an openness to the truth. Make a list of people in your circles (family, coworkers, neighbors) and pray for this same receptivity to the gospel.

WEEK 10 | DAY 4

Read Acts 10:34–48

1. What points did Peter emphasize about Jesus's earthly ministry in verses 36–39?

2. What key elements of the gospel did Peter include in verses 39–43?

3. Peter explained to Cornelius and his loved ones the way of salvation. What is the difference between being a good, God-fearing person, and being truly saved?

4. What was the immediate evidence that these Gentiles accepted Peter's message in faith?

5. How did Peter and his friends respond to this groundbreaking event, and how did Peter's actions contribute toward the unity of God's universal church?

MY RESPONSE

When have you sensed the Holy Spirit's power and presence in a unique way? If you can't think of a time, write a prayer that He will fill you to a greater extent and give you eyes to see where He is at work.

WEEK 10 | DAY 5

Review Acts 10, Read Ephesians 2:11–22

1. Based on your review of Acts 10, what is its significance for you today?

2. In Ephesians 2:11–22, Paul expounded on the inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan of redemption. From verses 11–13, make a "before and after" comparison of the Gentile condition using the template below.

Verse	Before	After

3. From Ephesians 2:14–16, explain exactly how this transformation was accomplished.

4. From Ephesians 2:17–22, what are the ultimate results of God's generous plan?

MY RESPONSE

If you are a Gentile, this is incredibly good news for you! No matter your ethnic heritage, write a prayer of thanksgiving celebrating that God included you in His invitation for salvation.

WEEK 11 | DAY 1

Read Acts 11:1–12

1. News spread quickly about the Gentile believers, and not surprisingly, Peter met with criticism when he returned to Jerusalem. What tactic did he take in responding to the disapproval of the Jewish believers? Why is a personal testimony so powerful?

2. Luke thought it necessary to repeat Peter's story a second time. What significance do you find in this repetition?

3. As you read through Peter's experience once again, highlight anything you may have missed and what different elements of the vision may represent.

4. What tone do you sense in God's words as relayed by Peter? What do you think this communicated to the reluctant group of believers?

5. What was the wisdom in bringing additional brothers in Christ along to visit Cornelius?

MY RESPONSE

What testimony has God given you that you could use to give Him glory?

WEEK 11 | DAY 2

Read Acts 11:13–18

1. Angelic activity is frequently mentioned in the book of Acts. According to the following verses, explain the purpose and ministry of angels.

   Psalm 91:11–12

   Isaiah 6:2–3

   Psalm 103:20

   Luke 1:19, 26, 30

   Psalm 148:1–2

   Hebrews 1:6–7, 14

2. Peter recounted how the Spirit had come upon the group of Gentiles. According to Ephesians 1:13–14, what does the gift of the Holy Spirit signify?

3. God's will had been confirmed through angels, visions, His Spirit, supernatural signs, God's Word (quoted by Peter in Acts 10:34) and the testimony of other believers. What additional confirmation did Peter mention in verse 16 and how was he now reminded of this truth? (see John 14:26)

4. What pointed question silenced Peter's critics? How does Proverbs 21:30 speak to this question?

MY RESPONSE

Being completely honest with yourself, what extra-biblical way of thinking would be difficult for you to give up in order to welcome stigmatized people into your faith community? What does this reveal about what you value?

WEEK 11 | DAY 3

Read Acts 11:15–18

1. The weight of evidence was convincing, but what was the ultimate influence that tipped the scales toward the Jewish believers concurring with Peter's assessment, and what was their heartfelt response? (see John 16:13-15)

2. What characteristics would it take to experience such a massive change of heart to celebrate the new way God was at work? Circle one of these that you would like to grow in personally.

3. What would the Jewish believers have missed if they had refused to change their thinking? (see Psalm 133:1; Romans 15:5–6; Philippians 2:2; Colossians 3:14-15)

4. Once again, Peter was integrally involved and endorsed a new avenue in the spread of God's kingdom on earth. How did Peter use these "keys to the kingdom" (Matthew 16:18–19) to throw the doors wide open for the Gentiles to enter?

5. Paul speaks of the Gentile inclusion in Romans 15:5–13. List key phrases or insights from this passage.

MY RESPONSE

Tell about an experience of worshiping with believers who are different from you culturally. What are the benefits of this type of experience?

WEEK 11 | DAY 4

Read Acts 11:19–26

1. What irony do you find in the effect that the persecution beginning with Stephen's martyrdom had on the cause of the gospel?

2. What do the verses below teach regarding God's unsearchable purposes?

   Genesis 50:20

   Isaiah 46:9–10

   Psalm 115:1–3

   Isaiah 55:8–9

3. What hope do you find in the verses above in a current difficult situation you face?

4. What qualities did Barnabas possess that made him such a value to the church?

5. A historical milestone occurred in Antioch. The name Christian means "Christ follower" or "of the party of Christ." What was the significance of others identifying the group of believers (originally in a derogatory manner) with this label?

MY RESPONSE

When you call something or someone "Christian" today, what significance does it carry? How will you remind yourself to carry His name with honor?

WEEK 11 | DAY 5

Read Acts 11:22–30

1. Barnabas, always ready to come alongside, undoubtedly had the gift of encouragement, but all believers are called to encourage others. Why is this so vital in the church, and how specifically are we to do it?

   Romans 1:10–12

   1 Thessalonians 4:17–18

   Ephesians 4:15–16, 29

   Hebrews 10:24–25

2. To whom could you provide spiritual encouragement this week? Write a name or names and what you plan to do.

3. Antioch of Syria, a large, cosmopolitan city in modern-day southern Turkey near the Syrian border, was the landing place of many persecuted believers. Describe the church planting strategy and why Barnabas went to find Saul to help him establish this church. (see also Acts 9:15)

4. The Spirit spoke through Agabus that a famine was coming. How does the spontaneous giving of the Antioch believers to brothers and sisters in Christ they had never met challenge your view of generosity within the body of Christ? (also see Proverbs 11:24–25, 28:27; Luke 3:11; 1 John 3:16-18)

MY RESPONSE

When you hear of a need, how readily do you respond? What could you change in the way you budget your resources to be prepared to give at a moment's notice?

WEEK 12 | DAY 1

Read Acts 12:1–5

1. On the heels of marvelous growth in the church, King Herod initiated a dark turn of events. What two major blows hit the early church, when did they happen, and how do you imagine the believers were affected?

2. What seemed to be Herod's motives, and what principles are evident about human nature?

3. James, the brother of John, was the first of the original twelve disciples to be martyred. Read Matthew 20:20–23 to recall an unflattering encounter the brothers had experienced with Jesus before His death. How had James grown since then?

4. When disappointments or tragedies beyond your control occur, what choices do you have?

5. While Peter was kept in prison under heavy guard, what was the church actively doing? Contrast the mighty power of Herod with the earnest action of the believers. (see James 5:16)

MY RESPONSE

On one hand, Acts 5 records the disciples being miraculously freed from prison by an angel. On the other hand, Peter's dear friend James had just been beheaded. What truths and promises help you trust God when the outcome of a situation is completely uncertain?

WEEK 12 | DAY 2

Read Acts 12:3–11

1. As a Jewish boy, Peter would have memorized enormous amounts of Scripture. As he sat bound in the darkness of prison, how might the following verses have comforted him? (see Psalm 23:4, 107:14–16, 142:7; Daniel 2:20–22)

2. How does hiding Scripture in your heart uplift you (see Psalm 119:28)? What is your experience with this and how would you like to grow?

3. Verse 5 is a major turning point in this story that cannot be overstated. Walk through the supernatural details of Peter's dramatic escape in verses 6–11. What stands out to you most?

4. Peter's training in quick obedience saved him when he wasn't even sure what he was experiencing was real. How are you growing in immediate obedience?

MY RESPONSE

In verse 6 we find Peter fast asleep, knowing he was securely in God's hands regardless of the outcome of his imprisonment. What have you learned in this study that can help you experience this same supernatural peace during difficult times?

WEEK 12 | DAY 3

Read Acts 12:11–17

1. When Peter finally realized his experience with the angel was real, where did he go and what did he do?

2. Summarize the situation at Mary's house when Peter appeared. What does this somewhat comical interaction with Rhoda reveal about the nature of human faith?

3. Remembering this event took place during the night, the believers were evidently praying around the clock for Peter. What truths about prayer do you find in the following verses about earnest prayer?

   Luke 18:1, 6–8

   Ephesians 6:18

   John 15:7

   1 Timothy 2:8

4. What is the balance between surrendering to God's sovereign will (e.g., the martyrdom of James) and praying expectantly (e.g., for Peter's release)? How do you hold these two concepts in tension?

MY RESPONSE

If we believe there is power in prayer, why is it often our last resort? What step will you take to prioritize prayer this week?

WEEK 12 | DAY 4

Read Acts 12:16–25

1. After Peter shared about his miraculous rescue, what did he do? What did the mention of James, the brother of Jesus, (verse 17) indicate about his relationship to Peter and his growing leadership role in the Jerusalem church?

2. James was put to death by sword while Peter was miraculously rescued. What do you make of the stark difference between these two scenarios, and what does it teach you about how God works?

3. What was the fallout of Peter's disappearance within Herod's administration?

4. Describe the political theater that played out in verse 20.

5. On the day of Herod's speech, how did the people—who depended on the king's country for their food supply—stroke his ego, and how did Herod respond?

MY RESPONSE

How easily do you fall prey to worry over political happenings nationally or around the world? What does this chapter help you to remember?

WEEK 12 | DAY 5

Read Acts 12:20–25

1. Describe the abrupt and sobering consequence of Herod's arrogance.

2. How do these verses explain God's swift justice?

   Proverbs 16:5, 18

   Isaiah 42:8

3. Herod had stretched out his hand against God's people (Acts 12:1), and God stretched out His hand against Herod and his people. How do the following verses relate to this narrative?

   Psalm 138:7

   Romans 12:19

   Isaiah 54:17

   2 Thessalonians 1:5–6

4. Contrast verses 23 and 24 as you think about Herod's earthly kingdom and the Kingdom of God. How does Isaiah 40:6–8 apply to these verses?

5. The stage is set in verse 25 for the next phase in the expansion of the church, as the transition will be made from Peter as the central character to Saul, who will soon be known as Paul. Who is mentioned and where were they going?

MY RESPONSE

Name a lesson or two that have stood out to you in the chapters of Acts you have studied. What work has God done in your life as a result?


ASIA
Tarsus
Antioch
Cyprus
Galilee
SYRIA
Sea of Galilee
Damascus
Caesarea
Samaria
Mediterranean Sea
Joppa
Jordan River
Lydia
Azotus
Gaza
Jerusalem
Dead Sea
Judea
EGYPT

THE GOSPEL

The book of Acts shows ordinary people boldly telling others what God had done through Jesus. Their message was not complicated, but it was life-changing: Jesus died for our sins, rose from the dead, and offers forgiveness and new life to everyone who turns to Him in faith. This simple-but-profound message is "the gospel."

All Scripture ultimately points to the good news of the gospel, and it is imperative that every person understand and personally receive God's invitation of salvation—and be prepared to share this good news with others.

The gospel can be understood through four parts: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration... and these parts then demand a personal Response from us.

CREATION

In the beginning, God created the heavens, the earth, and everything in them. He spoke creation into existence, and everything He made was good (Genesis 1:1, 31).

God created human beings in His own image. This means every person has dignity, value, and purpose. We were made to know God, enjoy a relationship with Him, reflect His character, and care for the world He created (Genesis 1:26–28; Psalm 8:3–6).

God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, where they lived in perfect relationship with Him, with each other, and with creation. Initially, they experienced no guilt, shame, suffering, or death.

God gave Adam and Eve freedom and responsibility, along with one clear command: they were not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God warned them that disobedience would bring death (Genesis 2:15–17).

THE FALL

In Genesis 3, Satan (disguised as a serpent) deceived Adam and Eve. They chose to distrust God and disobey His command. Sin entered the world through their disobedience, damaging humanity's relationship with God, with one another, and with creation.

Sin is more than making occasional mistakes or poor choices. It is rejecting God's authority and choosing our own way instead of His. Because humanity has been affected by sin, every person is born with a natural tendency to rebel against God through our thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions (Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:10–12, 23).

The Bible says, "Everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard" (Romans 3:23 NLT). God is perfectly holy, good, and just. Sin separates us from Him because our impurity and rebellion cannot remain in the presence of His perfect holiness.

Sin also carries a real consequence. Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death." Apart from God's rescue, we are spiritually separated from Him now and face eternal separation from Him in the future (Ephesians 2:1–3; Hebrews 9:27).

We cannot repair this separation through good behavior, religious activity, personal achievement, or sincere intentions. We need someone to rescue us.

REDEMPTION

Thankfully, God did not leave humanity without hope. Because of His great love, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to rescue us (John 3:16–17).

Jesus is fully God and fully human. He lived the perfect, sinless life that none of us could live. He taught the truth about God, showed compassion to broken people, and demonstrated the power and character of God's kingdom (John 1:1, 14; Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus willingly died on the cross, taking upon Himself the judgment our sins deserved. He became our substitute, paying the penalty for sin so that we could be forgiven and brought back into a relationship with God (Isaiah 53:5–6; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24).

But Jesus did not remain in the grave. He rose from the dead on the third day, defeating sin and death once and for all. His resurrection proved that He is the Son of God and that His sacrifice was sufficient to save us (Luke 24:1–8; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4).

Jesus later returned to heaven, where He now reigns as Lord and King. He offers forgiveness, peace with God, and eternal life to everyone who places their trust in Him (Acts 2:32–36; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 1:19–23). This is "salvation."

Salvation cannot be earned. It is a gift of God's grace, received through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 3:4–7).

RESTORATION

Jesus offers his salvation to everyone. He is also carrying out God's plan to restore everything that sin has damaged.

Those who trust in Christ are forgiven and brought into God's family. God gives them His Holy Spirit, who begins changing them from the inside out. This ongoing change is "spiritual growth." Christians still struggle with sin and hardship, but they are no longer separated from God or controlled by their old way of life (Romans 8:1–2, 14–17; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Through His people, God is already bringing signs of His restoration into the world. The church is called to proclaim the gospel, care for people in need, pursue justice and mercy, make disciples, and demonstrate the love and character of Jesus (Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 1:8; Micah 6:8).

One day, Jesus will return to judge evil, fully establish His kingdom, and make all things new. Sin, suffering, injustice, disease, and death will be gone. God will live with His people forever in a new creation that reflects His original purpose and glory (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1–5; 22:1–5).

OUR RESPONSE

Whenever God reveals truth to a person, He demands a response from them.

The gospel is offered to every person, regardless of background, ethnicity, age, social position, past failures, or present struggles. No one is saved by being good enough, and no one is beyond the reach of God's grace (Romans 10:11–13; Revelation 7:9–10).

God's invitation is not merely to agree with certain facts about Jesus. He calls us to turn from sin, trust in Christ, and surrender our lives to Him as Savior and Lord.

We respond to the gospel by:

- **Believing** that Jesus is the Son of God who died for our sins and rose from the dead (John 3:16; Romans 10:9).
- **Recognizing** and confessing that we have sinned and need God's forgiveness (Luke 18:13–14; Romans 3:23).
- **Repenting**, which means turning away from sin and turning toward God (Acts 2:37–38; 3:19).
- **Trusting** Jesus alone to save us rather than relying on our own goodness, effort, or religious activity (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8–9).
- **Surrendering** to Jesus as Lord and choosing to follow Him with our whole lives (Luke 9:23; Romans 14:7–9).

When a person truly trusts in Jesus, God forgives that person's sins, gives the gift of the Holy Spirit, brings that person into His family, and begins a lifelong process of transformation (Acts 2:38–39; Romans 8:14–16; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

The book of Acts repeatedly shows people hearing the gospel and responding with faith, repentance, baptism, and a new commitment to follow Jesus alongside other believers (Acts 2:41–47; 8:35–38; 16:29–34).

God is inviting you into a restored relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. The question is not simply whether you understand the gospel, but whether you have personally responded to it.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved." Acts 16:31