



# THE BOOK OF ACTS

THE WIDENING WAY: MISSION MULTIPLIES

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THE BOOK OF  
**ACTS**

THE WIDENING WAY: MISSION MULTIPLIES

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# DEAR CHURCH

AS OUR JOURNEY CONTINUES, WE WILL GET TO SEE THE FRUIT OF GOD'S WORK IN REDIRECTING THE ZEAL OF A MAN ONCE REFERRED TO AS SAUL (HEBREW NAME), NOW REFERRED TO IN THIS SECTION OF ACTS AS PAUL (ROMAN NAME), WHO WAS CALLED BY GOD TO BE 'THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES' (ACTS 9:15; ROMANS 11:13). PAUL WOULD BECOME THE GREATEST CHURCH PLANTER WHO EVER LIVED, AND GO ON TO WRITE THE MOST LETTERS (13 BOOKS OUT OF 27) INCLUDED IN OUR NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

WHAT IS ENCOURAGING THROUGH THIS JOURNEY IS THAT PAUL WAS NOT PERFECT, BUT SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH LIKE-MINDED AND MISSIONAL PEOPLE WHO HELD ONE ANOTHER TO THE STANDARD OF JESUS. THIS KEPT EACH OF THESE MINISTRY PARTNERS TRUE TO THEIR PURPOSE AND PRIORITY OF MAKING MUCH OF THE NAME OF JESUS, LIVING AS TRUE WORSHIPERS OF JESUS IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE. WHEN FAILURE WOULD HAPPEN, THEY WOULD CLING TO THE GRACE OF GOD OFFERED, ALLOWING THEM TO GET BACK UP AND REJOIN THE RACE. WHEN PERSECUTION WOULD HAPPEN, THEY WOULD LEARN HOW TO PRAISE THE LORD REGARDLESS OF THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES. IT WAS THROUGH THESE ACTIONS THAT THE MISSION OF THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS MULTIPLIED.

PASTOR BRYAN TEMA

# RESOURCES FOR THE JOURNEY

## RIGHT NOW MEDIA:

ACTS FROM LAUSANNE MOVEMENT  
THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES FROM LOUIS GIGLIO  
ACTS FROM EYEWITNESS

## APPS AND WEBSITES:

GSPATHWAY.ORG  
BLUELETTER BIBLE  
STEPBIBLE  
VERSES APP

## BOOKS:

"THE CHALLENGE OF ACTS" BY N.T. WRIGHT  
"THE BOOK OF ACTS" BY F.F. BRUCE  
"THE FAMILIAR STRANGER" BY TYLER STATON  
"MIRACLES" BY CRAIG KEENER  
"FOXES' BOOK OF MARTYRS" BY JOHN FOXE

## FOR THE FAMILY:

"ADVENTURES IN ACTS" BY DAVID LUCKMAN  
AND SILVANA DI MARCELLO

SCAN THIS CODE OR USE THE LINK FOR  
SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS EACH WEEK.

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# ACTS FROM THE AIR

THE BOOK OF ACTS IS THE SECOND BOOK WRITTEN BY THE PHYSICIAN, LUKE. IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE GOSPEL OF LUKE, ACTS WAS WRITTEN TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS AND POINT TO THE CONTINUED WORK OF THE CHURCH AFTER JESUS' ASCENSION. THE OVERALL THEME OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES COULD BE SUMMED UP AS "THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST PERMEATING THE WORLD THROUGH THE FORMATION OF COMMUNITIES THAT FOCUS ON THE TEACHING AND DISCIPLESHIP OF JESUS." WE SEE THIS WORK CARRIED FORTH THROUGH THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES AND THOSE WHO HAVE ENCOUNTERED AND BEEN CHANGED BY JESUS.

ACTS FOLLOWS PETER, PAUL, AND OTHERS AS THE HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERS THEM TO REACH OUT TO THE KNOWN WORLD WITH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS. THROUGH VARIOUS MISSIONARY JOURNEYS, WE SEE THE GOSPEL GO FORTH IN POWER TO FORM NEW COMMUNITIES OF BELIEVERS. MANY OF THE RESULTS OF THESE JOURNEYS ARE DOCUMENTED THROUGH THE EPISTLES WRITTEN BY PAUL, PETER, AND OTHER DISCIPLES AS THEY WRITE TO STRENGTHEN, ENCOURAGE, AND ADMONISH THE CHURCHES THAT WERE PLANTED.



WE SEE THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES AS SOMETHING GREATER THAN THE WORK OF ANY INDIVIDUAL; RATHER, AS THE WORK OF THE ASCENDED JESUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, EMPOWERING WILLING HUMANS TO SUBMIT TO THE RULE AND REIGN OF JESUS AS THEY MAKE DISCIPLES IN THE WORLD AROUND THEM. AS WE JOURNEY THROUGH ACTS, OUR DESIRE IS TO INSPIRE BELIEVERS TO NOT ONLY LEARN ABOUT JESUS, BUT TO TAKE ON HIS CALLING OF GOING, BAPTIZING, TEACHING, AND MAKING DISCIPLES OF THE PEOPLE THE LORD HAS PUT IN OUR LIVES.

LET'S JOURNEY TOGETHER!

## ACTS FROM THE GROUND

THE CHURCH IS GROWING IN UNPRECEDENTED WAYS. THE APOSTLES ARE MOVING AROUND THE KNOWN WORLD, SHARING THE GOSPEL AND EXPERIENCING PERSECUTION. THROUGH THIS SECTION, WE SEE INCREDIBLE HIGHS AND DESPERATE LOWS - BUT THE REMINDER OVER AND OVER AGAIN IS THAT GOD USES HIS PEOPLE TO FULFILL HIS PURPOSES. WE'LL SEE BONDS GROW BETWEEN THE APOSTLES, AND WE'LL SEE DISAGREEMENTS AND SEPARATION. EVEN IN THE MIDST OF ALL OF THIS, GOD IS PLANTING SEEDS IN FERTILE SOIL THAT WILL HELP PEOPLE COME TO KNOW HIM IN RADICAL WAYS.

AS YOU FOLLOW ALONG THROUGHOUT THE WIDENING WAY, OPEN YOUR HEART AND MIND TO THE WORK THAT GOD IS CALLING YOU TO. IN THE SAME WAY THAT THE APOSTLES TRUSTED GOD TO EXPAND HIS KINGDOM THROUGH THEIR HEAD, HEART, AND HANDS, ENGAGE WITH GOD THROUGH EXPECTATION THAT THE MISSION FIELD IS ALL AROUND YOU. HOW COULD HE USE YOU IN YOUR PLACE OF SURRENDER TO INVITE OTHERS INTO HIS KINGDOM?

LET'S FOLLOW THE WIDENING WAY!

# TOOLS FOR THE WAY

AS THE APOSTLES BROKE NEW GROUND AND FOLLOWED THE CALL OF JESUS INTO THE WORLD AROUND THEM, THEY NEEDED HIS WISDOM AND THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AS WE FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE AND TRUST IN JESUS, WE NEED TO BE PREPARED TO MOVE IN THE WAYS THAT HE HAS CALLED US. THESE TOOLS WILL HELP YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY.



## COMPANIONS:

THE APOSTLES GIVE US AN AMAZING EXAMPLE OF TRAVELING TOGETHER. THEY REALIZED THAT THE MISSION IN FRONT OF THEM WAS EXPANSIVE AND THAT SOMETIMES WE JUST NEED OTHER PEOPLE. WHEN THE ROAD IS HARD, WHEN WE FEEL HEAVY, AND WHEN WE CAN'T SEE THE PATH IN FRONT OF US, COMPANIONS ON THE JOURNEY CAN HELP US TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD AS THEY ENCOURAGE US IN THE SPIRIT.



## MISSION:

THE APOSTLES WERE LIVING FOR SOMETHING BIGGER THAN THEMSELVES. THEY KNEW BOTH WHO GOD HAD CALLED THEM TO BE AND WHAT HE HAD CALLED THEM TO. WHEN THE PATH WIDENS, AND WE FEEL CONFUSED, KNOWING OUR MISSION CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STALLING OUT AND PUSHING FORWARD.



## GOD'S WORD:

OFTEN, THROUGHOUT THIS SECTION, WE SEE GOD'S PEOPLE POINTING BACK TO WHAT HE SAID THROUGH HIS WORD. THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS GIVEN US THE TOOL THAT WE NEED TO REMEMBER GOD'S CHARACTER AND CALLING. AS WE JOURNEY THROUGH THIS PATH, WORK ON MEMORIZING GOD'S WORD SO IT CAN GUIDE YOU WHEN YOU DON'T FEEL CERTAIN.



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FROM PASTOR BRYAN:

AM I LIVING THE LIFE OF A  
WORSHIPER OF JESUS, GIVING  
HIM CONTROL OVER ALL AREAS  
OF MY LIFE?

DO I TEND TO FLY SOLO, OR,  
LIKE PAUL, DO I LOOK FOR  
MINISTRY PARTNERS FOR  
PURPOSES OF ACCOUNTABILITY?

DO I POUR THE WISDOM THAT  
I HAVE ACQUIRED INTO OTHERS,  
OR HAS MY LIFE GROWN  
APATHETIC?

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE AND  
HOW SHOULD THIS IMPACT MY  
PRAYER LIFE?

# WEEK ONE | A MISSIONAL MINDSET

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"THE NEXT SABBATH ALMOST THE WHOLE CITY GATHERED TO HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD. BUT WHEN THE JEWS SAW THE CROWDS, THEY WERE FILLED WITH JEALOUSY AND BEGAN TO CONTRADICT WHAT WAS SPOKEN BY PAUL, REVILING HIM. AND PAUL AND BARNABAS SPOKE OUT BOLDLY, SAYING, "IT WAS NECESSARY THAT THE WORD OF GOD BE SPOKEN FIRST TO YOU. SINCE YOU THRUST IT ASIDE AND JUDGE YOURSELVES UNWORTHY OF ETERNAL LIFE, BEHOLD, WE ARE TURNING TO THE GENTILES. FOR SO THE LORD HAS COMMANDED US, SAYING, "I HAVE MADE YOU A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH." AND WHEN THE GENTILES HEARD THIS, THEY BEGAN REJOICING AND GLORIFYING THE WORD OF THE LORD, AND AS MANY AS WERE APPOINTED TO ETERNAL LIFE BELIEVED. AND THE WORD OF THE LORD WAS SPREADING THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE REGION." ACTS 13:44-49

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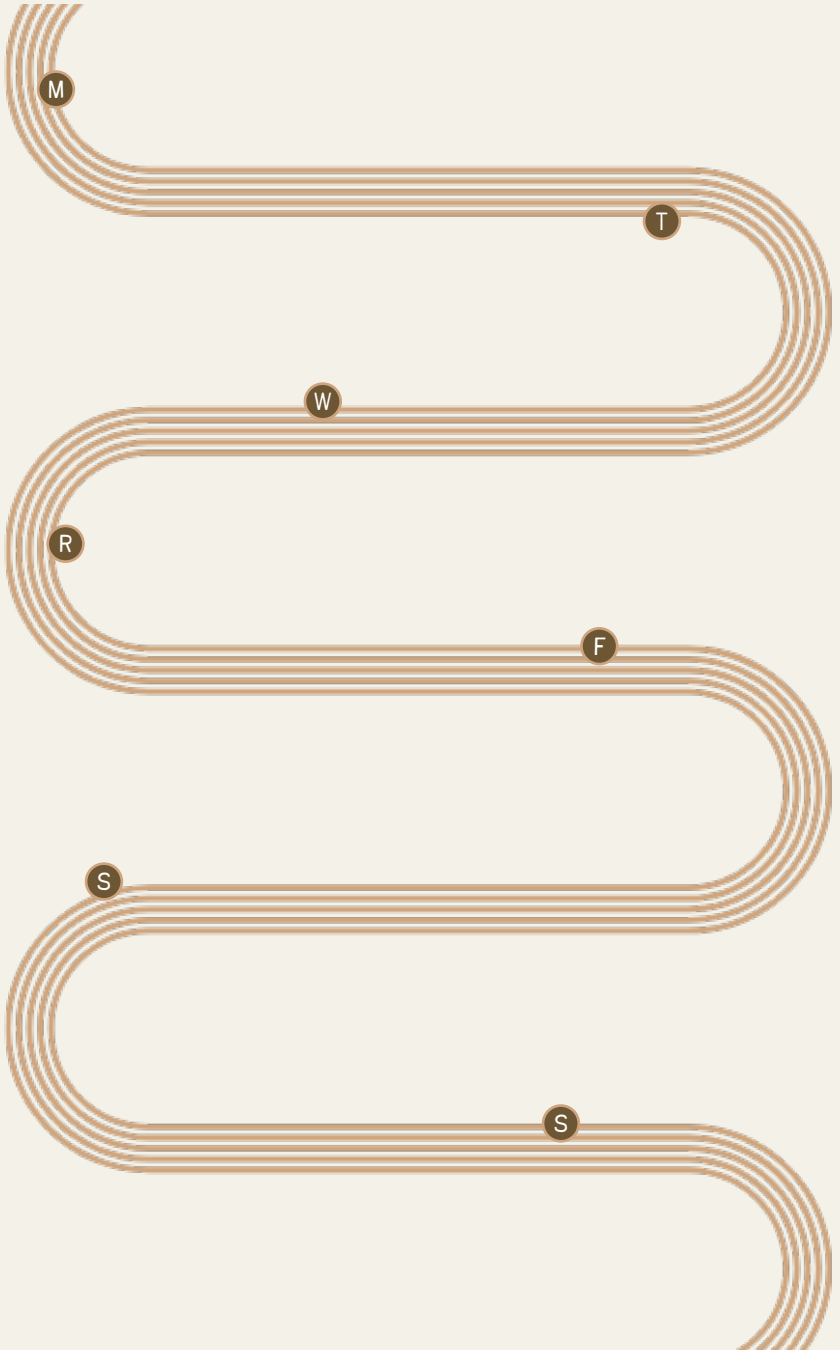
WE SEE A GREAT TENSION IN ACTS 11 AND 13. PAUL HAS BEEN CALLED BY JESUS TO MINISTER TO THE GENTILES, AND THE JEWS, WHO ARE THE CHOSEN PEOPLE OF GOD, STAND IN THE FRUSTRATION OF SEEING GOD'S PROMISE EXTEND TO PEOPLE THAT THEY HAVE TRADITIONALLY SEEN AS UNWORTHY. PAUL AND BARNABAS' MINISTRY SHOWS US A POIGNANT TRUTH. GOD'S CALL OF SALVATION IS OPEN AND AVAILABLE FOR ALL WHO BELIEVE - EVEN THE PEOPLE THAT MIGHT SURPRISE US.

THIS WEEK, WE'LL SPEND TIME THINKING ABOUT WHO GOD HAS PUT IN OUR PATH AND CALLED US TO POINT TOWARDS HIM. MAP OUT YOUR WEEK AND THINK ABOUT THE FOLLOWING: WHO HAS JESUS CALLED YOU TO SHOW HIS LOVE TO WHERE YOU LIVE, WHERE YOU WORK, AND WHERE YOU PLAY?





LET'S MAP OUR WEEK!











## WEEK TWO | BATTLE READY

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"NOW WHEN HEROD WAS ABOUT TO BRING HIM OUT, ON THAT VERY NIGHT, PETER WAS SLEEPING BETWEEN TWO SOLDIERS, BOUND WITH TWO CHAINS, AND SENTRIES BEFORE THE DOOR WERE GUARDING THE PRISON. AND BEHOLD, AN ANGEL OF THE LORD STOOD NEXT TO HIM, AND A LIGHT SHONE IN THE CELL. HE STRUCK PETER ON THE SIDE AND WOKE HIM, SAYING, "GET UP QUICKLY." AND THE CHAINS FELL OFF HIS HANDS. AND THE ANGEL SAID TO HIM, "DRESS YOURSELF AND PUT ON YOUR SANDALS." AND HE DID SO. AND HE SAID TO HIM, "WRAP YOUR CLOAK AROUND YOU AND FOLLOW ME." AND HE WENT OUT AND FOLLOWED HIM. HE DID NOT KNOW THAT WHAT WAS BEING DONE BY THE ANGEL WAS REAL, BUT THOUGHT HE WAS SEEING A VISION. WHEN THEY HAD PASSED THE FIRST AND THE SECOND GUARD, THEY CAME TO THE IRON GATE LEADING INTO THE CITY. IT OPENED FOR THEM OF ITS OWN ACCORD, AND THEY WENT OUT AND WENT ALONG ONE STREET, AND IMMEDIATELY THE ANGEL LEFT HIM. WHEN PETER CAME TO HIMSELF, HE SAID, "NOW I AM SURE THAT THE LORD HAS SENT HIS ANGEL AND RESCUED ME FROM THE HAND OF HEROD AND FROM ALL THAT THE JEWISH PEOPLE WERE EXPECTING." ACTS 12:6-11

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IN ACTS 12, PERSECUTION IN THE CHURCH RAMPS UP. JAMES IS KILLED BY HEROD, AND PETER IS ARRESTED AND SET TO BE EXECUTED FOR HIS MINISTRY. GOD HAD BEEN PREPARING THESE MEN FOR THIS SEASON IN INTENTIONAL WAYS. THEY KNEW HIS WORD, KNEW HIS PRESENCE, AND KNEW HIS CALLING. WHEN PERSECUTION CAME, THEY WERE PREPARED TO DO WHAT THEY NEEDED TO DO IN ORDER TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL.

SOMETIMES IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO FACE THE TRIALS OF THE WORLD BECAUSE WE DON'T PREPARE OUR MINDS. THIS WEEK, USE THE FOLLOWING EXERCISE TO HELP MEMORIZE A PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE THAT WILL HELP YOU TO STAND UP TO THE ISSUES IN FRONT OF YOU.



POTENTIAL VERSES TO CONSIDER:

PROVERBS 3:5-6, ISAIAH 41:10, ROMANS 8:28, ISAIAH 26:3

AS YOU THINK ABOUT WHICH VERSE WOULD BE HELPFUL TO MEMORIZE, CONSIDER YOUR CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND LOOK FOR VERSES IN THE BIBLE OR ONLINE THAT SPEAK TO THAT SPECIFIC ISSUE.



CHOSEN VERSE:

DAY ONE: READ IT MULTIPLE TIMES AND LET IT SPEAK TO YOU.

DAY TWO: WRITE IT OUT MULTIPLE TIMES AND LET IT SPEAK TO YOU.

DAY THREE: WRITE IT OUT MULTIPLE TIMES WITHOUT REFERENCING THE WORDS!

DAY FOUR: SHARE IT WITH SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU.

DAY FIVE: PRAY IT THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

DAY SIX: ASK GOD FOR A NEW VERSE.

DAY SEVEN: START THE PROCESS WITH THAT NEW VERSE.









# WEEK THREE | TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

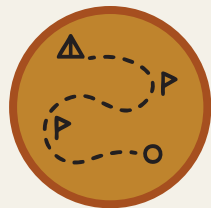
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"NOW AT ICONIUM THEY ENTERED TOGETHER INTO THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE AND SPOKE IN SUCH A WAY THAT A GREAT NUMBER OF BOTH JEWS AND GREEKS BELIEVED. BUT THE UNBELIEVING JEWS STIRRED UP THE GENTILES AND POISONED THEIR MINDS AGAINST THE BROTHERS. SO THEY REMAINED FOR A LONG TIME, SPEAKING BOLDLY FOR THE LORD, WHO BORE WITNESS TO THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, GRANTING SIGNS AND WONDERS TO BE DONE BY THEIR HANDS. BUT THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY WERE DIVIDED: SOME SIDED WITH THE JEWS AND SOME WITH THE APOSTLES. WHEN AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE BY BOTH GENTILES AND JEWS, WITH THEIR RULERS, TO MISTREAT THEM AND TO STONE THEM, THEY LEARNED OF IT AND FLED TO LYSTRA AND DERBE, CITIES OF LYCAONIA, AND TO THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY, AND THERE THEY CONTINUED TO PREACH THE GOSPEL." ACTS 14:1-7

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IN ACTS 14, WE SEE PAUL AND BARNABAS WALK THROUGH VARIOUS TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS. NOT ONLY ARE THEY BESET BY BOTH JEWS AND GENTILES, BUT PAUL IS STONED AND LEFT TO DIE. AS IS OFTEN THE CASE, PERSECUTION IN THE CHURCH LED TO AN EXPLOSION OF GROWTH AND INTEREST IN THE GOSPEL. PAUL AND BARNABAS WERE SO COMPELLED BY THE GOSPEL THAT THEY COULDN'T KEEP IT TO THEMSELVES - THEY HAD TO BRING IT BEFORE OTHERS TO PRESENT THE HOPE OF JESUS. THIS WEEK, FOLLOW ONE OF THE EXAMPLES ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE AND WORK THROUGH WRITING YOUR TESTIMONY. THIS EXERCISE CAN BE HELPFUL TO PREPARE YOUR HEART AND MIND TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY IN A CLEAR AND MEANINGFUL WAY WITH THOSE AROUND YOU.





## WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

WHO ARE THE FOUR PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD THE MOST IMPACT ON YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE? HOW? AS YOU THINK ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM, HOW HAVE THEY INSPIRED YOUR WALK WITH JESUS? USE THESE STORIES TO WRITE OUT DIFFERENT STAGES OF YOUR LIFE AND HOW YOU MIGHT IMPACT OTHERS.

THINK THROUGH THE MAJOR MILESTONES OF YOUR LIFE. WHEN DID YOU COME TO KNOW JESUS? HOW DID HE HELP YOU GROW? WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAJOR LIFE EVENTS THAT CATEGORIZE EACH STAGE? WHAT WAS THE BIG LESSON YOU LEARNED IN EACH STAGE? CAN YOU PUT ALL OF THESE AREAS TOGETHER IN ONE COHESIVE STORY THAT TELLS ABOUT YOUR PATH WITH JESUS?

TAKE TIME TO TO ANSWER THESE PROMPTS AND EXPOUND ON THEM IN A PERSONAL JOURNAL OR EVEN IN THE NOTES APP ON YOUR PHONE. TRY TO THINK OF IT IN A WAY THAT YOU COULD MEMORIZE THE WHOLE EXERCISE SO THAT YOU COULD SHARE IT WITH SOMEONE IN A MINUTE OR LESS.

## WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR STORY?

THEN SPEND SOME TIME THINKING THROUGH THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

WHO IS SOMEONE THAT THE LORD HAS PUT IN MY LIFE THAT I MIGHT SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH?

WHAT ARE SOME REASONS THAT I MIGHT FEEL HESITANT TO SHARE WITH THEM?

WHAT MAKES THE GOSPEL SUCH GOOD NEWS THAT IT'S WORTH SHARING?

HOW CAN I BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO?









# COMMUNING WITH GOD & OTHERS THIS SUMMER

"GOD IS OFTEN EXPERIENCED NOT ONLY IN DRAMATIC MOMENTS, BUT IN ATTENTION, DELIGHT, RELATIONSHIP, MOVEMENT, BEAUTY, AND REST."

COMPLETE ONE ACTIVITY FROM EACH CATEGORY EVERY WEEK.  
CHOOSE ACTIVITIES THAT CHALLENGE YOUR USUAL RHYTHMS.  
JOURNAL WHERE YOU SENSED GOD MOST CLEARLY.

## CREATE

MAKE SOMETHING. REFLECT THE CREATIVITY OF GOD.

PAINT OR SKETCH WHILE LISTENING TO WORSHIP MUSIC

WRITE A PRAYER IN THE FORM OF A POEM

START A GRATITUDE JOURNAL FOR THE SUMMER

TAKE PHOTOS OF THINGS THAT REMIND YOU OF GOD'S BEAUTY

PLANT FLOWERS, HERBS, OR A GARDEN

LEARN TO BAKE BREAD FROM SCRATCH

CREATE A PLAYLIST THAT CAPTURES YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

BUILD SOMETHING WITH YOUR HANDS (WOODWORKING, POTTERY, LEGO, ETC.)

WRITE ENCOURAGEMENT CARDS TO FRIENDS OR NEIGHBORS

MAKE A PIECE OF ART INSPIRED BY A PSALM

REARRANGE OR DECORATE A SPACE IN YOUR HOME TO FEEL RESTFUL AND SACRED

COMPOSE A SIMPLE PRAYER LITURGY FOR YOUR FAMILY OR SMALL GROUP

## CAVORT

MOVE YOUR BODY. EXPERIENCE GOD THROUGH MOTION, PLAY, AND WONDER.

TAKE A "PRAYER WALK" THROUGH YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

GO HIKING AND SPEND TIME IN SILENCE

WATCH A SUNRISE OR SUNSET OUTDOORS

SWIM IN A LAKE OR POOL AND THANK GOD FOR JOY

DANCE IN YOUR KITCHEN TO WORSHIP MUSIC

TRY SABBATH BIKING: RIDE SLOWLY WITH NO DESTINATION

PLAY A SPORT JUST FOR FUN

GO BAREFOOT IN THE GRASS AND PRACTICE GRATITUDE

SPEND AN HOUR OUTSIDE WITHOUT YOUR PHONE

TAKE YOUR KIDS OR FRIENDS TO A PARK AND FULLY JOIN IN THE PLAY

PRACTICE BREATH PRAYERS WHILE STRETCHING OR EXERCISING

PADDLEBOARD, KAYAK, OR CANOE IN SILENCE.

# COMMUNE

## SPEND MEANINGFUL TIME WITH OTHERS.

- SHARE A MEAL WITH SOMEONE YOU WANT TO KNOW BETTER
- HOST A BACKYARD FIRE AND TELL STORIES
- PRAY WITH A FRIEND WEEKLY THROUGH THE SUMMER
- INVITE ANOTHER FAMILY OVER FOR DESSERT
- ASK AN OLDER BELIEVER ABOUT THEIR FAITH JOURNEY
- HAVE A NO-PHONES DINNER
- SERVE TOGETHER AT A LOCAL MINISTRY OR SHELTER
- RECONNECT WITH SOMEONE YOU'VE DRIFTED AWAY FROM
- ATTEND CHURCH AND INTENTIONALLY SEEK OUT SOMEONE NEW TO MEET
- START A SUMMER BOOK DISCUSSION WITH FRIENDS
- BLESS A NEIGHBOR ANONYMOUSLY
- SPEND INTENTIONAL ONE-ON-ONE TIME WITH YOUR SPOUSE, CHILD, OR FRIEND

# CONSUME

## RECEIVE GOODNESS THOUGHTFULLY: FOOD, DRINK, BOOKS, BEAUTY, AND IDEAS.

- READ A GOSPEL SLOWLY OVER THE SUMMER
- READ A BOOK THAT STRETCHES YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD
- DRINK COFFEE OUTSIDE IN SILENCE BEFORE CHECKING YOUR PHONE
- HAVE A FEAST NIGHT AND CELEBRATE GOD'S ABUNDANCE
- TRY FASTING FROM SOMETHING DISTRACTING FOR A WEEK
- READ A PSALM BEFORE BED EVERY NIGHT
- LISTEN TO AN ALBUM FROM START TO FINISH WITHOUT MULTITASKING
- VISIT A LOCAL COFFEE SHOP AND PEOPLE-WATCH PRAYERFULLY
- READ A BIOGRAPHY OF A FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN
- EAT FRESH SUMMER FRUIT SLOWLY AND GRATEFULLY
- MEMORIZE A MEANINGFUL PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE
- WATCH A MEANINGFUL FILM AND DISCUSS ITS THEMES WITH OTHERS

WEEK ONE:

WEEK TWO:

WEEK THREE:

WEEK FOUR:

WEEK FIVE:

WEEK SIX:

WEEK SEVEN:

# WEEK FOUR | THE DANGERS OF LEGALISM

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"THE APOSTLES AND THE ELDERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER TO CONSIDER THIS MATTER. AND AFTER THERE HAD BEEN MUCH DEBATE, PETER STOOD UP AND SAID TO THEM, "BROTHERS, YOU KNOW THAT IN THE EARLY DAYS GOD MADE A CHOICE AMONG YOU, THAT BY MY MOUTH THE GENTILES SHOULD HEAR THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL AND BELIEVE. AND GOD, WHO KNOWS THE HEART, BORE WITNESS TO THEM, BY GIVING THEM THE HOLY SPIRIT JUST AS HE DID TO US, AND HE MADE NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN US AND THEM, HAVING CLEANSED THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH. NOW, THEREFORE, WHY ARE YOU PUTTING GOD TO THE TEST BY PLACING A YOKE ON THE NECK OF THE DISCIPLES THAT NEITHER OUR FATHERS NOR WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BEAR? BUT WE BELIEVE THAT WE WILL BE SAVED THROUGH THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS, JUST AS THEY WILL." ACTS 15:6-11

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THE APOSTLES STAND AT A CROSSROADS IN ACTS 15. PAUL AND BARNABAS HAVE FOUND THEMSELVES PUSHING FOR INCLUSION OF GENTILES IN THE FAMILY OF CHRIST. THE PHARISEES HAVE MET THEM WITH CONTENTION AND FRUSTRATION, NOT BELIEVING THAT GENTILES ARE WELCOME IN THE NEW COVENANT. PAUL AND BARNABAS MAKE A CASE FOR INCLUSION AND PUSH AGAINST THIS LEGALISM, AND WE SEE THE GOSPEL ADVANCE IN NEW WAYS, WHILE ALSO TAKING IN THE BLOWBACK FROM THE PHARISEES. AS YOU READ THE PASSAGE AND THINK THROUGH THE CONFLICT, SPEND TIME WALKING THROUGH THE FOLLOWING EXERCISE TO THINK ABOUT HOW GOD'S RADICAL INCLUSION CHANGES LIVES.

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REMEMBER: IT'S BECAUSE OF GOD'S RADICAL INCLUSION THAT WE CAN COME BEFORE HIM AND CALL HIM FATHER.

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## STEP ONE

SPEND TIME THINKING ABOUT PEOPLE  
WHO YOU MIGHT HAVE ACCIDENTALLY  
OR UNINTENTIONALLY SEEN AS BEING  
UNWORTHY OF HIS LOVE OR WHO MIGHT  
SEEM TOO FAR GONE.

## STEP TWO

SPEND TIME ASKING GOD TO SOFTEN  
YOUR HEART TOWARDS THIS PERSON OR  
GROUP OF PEOPLE.

## STEP THREE

TAKE TIME TO LOOK THROUGH SCRIPTURE OR  
USE THE INTERNET TO FIND PASSAGES OF  
SCRIPTURE THAT TALK ABOUT "THE OTHER"  
WRITE ANY PASSAGES OUT IN THE COLUMN  
TO THE RIGHT THAT STAND OUT TO YOU.

## PASSAGES ABOUT THE OTHER

## NOW

TAKE TIME TO PRAY FOR GOD TO  
DRAW YOUR HEART TO BE MORE OPEN  
TO HIS WORK AND WORLD.









# WEEK FIVE | TEAMWORK

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**"AS THEY WENT ON THEIR WAY THROUGH THE CITIES, THEY DELIVERED TO THEM FOR OBSERVANCE THE DECISIONS THAT HAD BEEN REACHED BY THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS WHO WERE IN JERUSALEM. SO THE CHURCHES WERE STRENGTHENED IN THE FAITH, AND THEY INCREASED IN NUMBERS DAILY."** ACTS 16:4-5

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AT THE END OF ACTS 15 AND THE BEGINNING OF ACTS 16, PAUL AND BARNABAS SEPARATE, PAUL AND SILAS BEGIN TRAVELING TOGETHER, AND PAUL BEGINS HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH TIMOTHY. EVEN IN THE MIDST OF CONFLICT AND FRUSTRATION, GOD HAS A WAY OF USING HIS PEOPLE TO ACCOMPLISH HIS GOALS. AS WE LOOKED AT LEGALISM LAST WEEK AND SAW THE IMAGE OF GOD IN OTHERS, WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE HIM IN THE MIDST OF ALL OF OUR STRUGGLES. TAKE TIME TO PRAY THIS PRAYER EACH DAY THIS WEEK AND THEN REFLECT ON HOW IT MADE YOU FEEL EACH DAY:

*Father, I come before You honestly and humbly, asking You to soften my heart. There are places in me that have become guarded, frustrated, weary, or numb, and I need Your Spirit to gently break through them. Forgive me for the ways I have failed to see others as people created in Your image. When I am quick to judge, slow to listen, or tempted to withdraw into bitterness or indifference, remind me of the mercy You have shown me. Teach me to look at people through Your eyes - with compassion, patience, and grace. Help me to remember that every person I encounter carries dignity because they were formed by You and loved by You.*

*Jesus, shape my heart to reflect Yours. Remove pride, resentment, cynicism, and fear, and replace them with humility, tenderness, and understanding. Give me the ability to slow down long enough to truly see people - not as interruptions, opponents, or disappointments, but as image-bearers worthy of love and honor. Heal the places in me that have become hardened through hurt or disappointment, and make me more compassionate in the way I speak, think, and respond. Let Your love become greater than my defensiveness, and let Your Spirit form in me a heart that reflects the kindness, mercy, and truth of Your Kingdom. Amen.*





USE THE SPACE BELOW TO WRITE REFLECTIONS  
EACH DAY ON HOW THE PRAYER HAS IMPACTED  
YOUR HEART AND MIND:

**M**

**T**

**W**

**R**

**F**

**S**









# WEEK SIX | TRANSFORMED LIFE

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**"AND A VISION APPEARED TO PAUL IN THE NIGHT: A MAN OF MACEDONIA WAS STANDING THERE, URGING HIM AND SAYING, 'COME OVER TO MACEDONIA AND HELP US.' AND WHEN PAUL HAD SEEN THE VISION, IMMEDIATELY WE SOUGHT TO GO ON INTO MACEDONIA, CONCLUDING THAT GOD HAD CALLED US TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THEM." ACTS 16:9-10**

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PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUES AS THE HOLY SPIRIT REDIRECTS HIM FROM ASIA INTO MACEDONIA, LEADING TO THE SPREADING OF THE GOSPEL IN EUROPE. PAUL AND HIS COMPANIONS MINISTER IN PHILIPPI, WHERE LYDIA BECOMES THE FIRST RECORDED CONVERT, A SLAVE GIRL IS FREED FROM DEMONIC OPPRESSION, AND PAUL AND SILAS ARE IMPRISONED AFTER DISRUPTING LOCAL PROFITS. FOLLOWING A MIRACULOUS EARTHQUAKE AND THEIR FAITHFUL WITNESS, THE PHILIPPIN JAILER AND HIS HOUSEHOLD COME TO FAITH. FROM THERE, PAUL TRAVELS THROUGH THESSALONICA AND BERA, PREACHING THAT JESUS IS THE PROMISED MESSIAH. WHILE SOME REJECT THE MESSAGE AND STIR UP PERSECUTION, MANY JEWS AND GREEKS BELIEVE. THROUGHOUT THE PASSAGE, GOD CONSISTENTLY GUIDES HIS MISSION, OPENS HEARTS TO THE GOSPEL, AND ADVANCES THE CHURCH EVEN THROUGH SUFFERING, OPPOSITION, AND UNEXPECTED CIRCUMSTANCES.

AS YOU PROCESS THROUGH THIS PASSAGE THIS WEEK, THINK ABOUT THE IDEA OF PERSPECTIVE. WE CAN OFTEN FALL INTO A VERY EARTHLY MINDSET WHERE WE PRIORITIZE OUR OWN NEEDS, DESIRES, AND THOUGHTS. THE CHRISTIAN IDENTITY HELPS US TO REALIZE THAT GOD'S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS, AND WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DIE TO OURSELVES AND THINK OF OTHERS. THIS WEEK, TAKE TIME TO WALK THROUGH THE FOLLOWING EXERCISE:













# WEEK SEVEN | GOD WHO IS NEAR

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**"AND PAUL WENT IN, AS WAS HIS CUSTOM, AND ON THREE SABBATH DAYS HE REASONED WITH THEM FROM THE SCRIPTURES, EXPLAINING AND PROVING THAT IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE CHRIST TO SUFFER AND TO RISE FROM THE DEAD, AND SAYING, "THIS JESUS, WHOM I PROCLAIM TO YOU, IS THE CHRIST." AND SOME OF THEM WERE PERSUADED AND JOINED PAUL AND SILAS, AS DID A GREAT MANY OF THE DEVOUT GREEKS AND NOT A FEW OF THE LEADING WOMEN."**

ACTS 17:2-4

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PAUL ARRIVES IN ATHENS AND IS DEEPLY TROUBLED BY THE CITY'S WIDESPREAD IDOLATRY, YET HE RESPONDS BY ENGAGING BOTH JEWS AND GREEK PHILOSOPHERS IN THOUGHTFUL CONVERSATION ABOUT JESUS AND THE RESURRECTION. INVITED TO SPEAK AT THE AREOPAGUS, PAUL BEGINS WITH THE ATHENIANS' ALTAR "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD" AND USES IT AS A BRIDGE TO PROCLAIM THE ONE TRUE CREATOR WHO MADE THE WORLD AND DOES NOT DWELL IN TEMPLES MADE BY HUMAN HANDS. HE EXPLAINS THAT GOD SUSTAINS ALL LIFE, DESIRES PEOPLE TO SEEK HIM, AND NOW CALLS EVERYONE TO REPENT BECAUSE HE HAS APPOINTED JESUS AS THE JUDGE OF THE WORLD, PROVING IT THROUGH THE RESURRECTION. WHILE SOME MOCK PAUL'S MESSAGE, OTHERS ARE CURIOUS AND A NUMBER OF PEOPLE BELIEVE, INCLUDING DIONYSIUS AND DAMARIS. THE PASSAGE HIGHLIGHTS PAUL'S ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE THE GOSPEL WITHIN A DIFFERENT CULTURE WHILE REMAINING FAITHFUL TO THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS.

THIS GOOD NEWS THAT GOD DOESN'T JUST EXIST AS A CONCEPT, BUT IS LIVING, ACTIVE, AND DESIRES TO BE KNOWN, IS JUST AS TRUE TODAY AS IT WAS FOR THE ATHENIANS. IT'S BEEN SAID THAT FAITH FUNCTIONS AS TASTEBUDS IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LIVING GOD. TASTEBUDS DON'T DETERMINE WHAT FLAVORS OR INGREDIENTS ARE IN A FOOD - THEY DETECT IT. SIMILARLY, OUR FAITH ALLOWS US TO DETECT THE NATURE OF GOD IN THE WORLD AROUND US: THINGS THAT ARE TRUE OF HIM WHETHER WE PICK UP ON IT OR NOT. THE





DANGER COMES WHEN WE ARE INUNDATED WITH CULTURE AND OUR TASTEBUDS STOP FUNCTIONING PROPERLY, UNABLE TO DETECT THINGS ABOUT GOD'S NATURE ACCURATELY. WHEN SOMEONE IS MALNOURISHED, THEIR TASTEBUDS STOP WORKING CORRECTLY. YET WHEN WE FEAST ON HIS WORD AND DRINK DEEPLY OF HIS PRESENCE, OUR FAITH ALLOWS US TO SEE HIM IN EVERYTHING!

**SPEND THIS WEEK SEARCHING OUT  
THE EVIDENCE OF GOD  
IN THESE AREAS OF YOUR LIFE**

