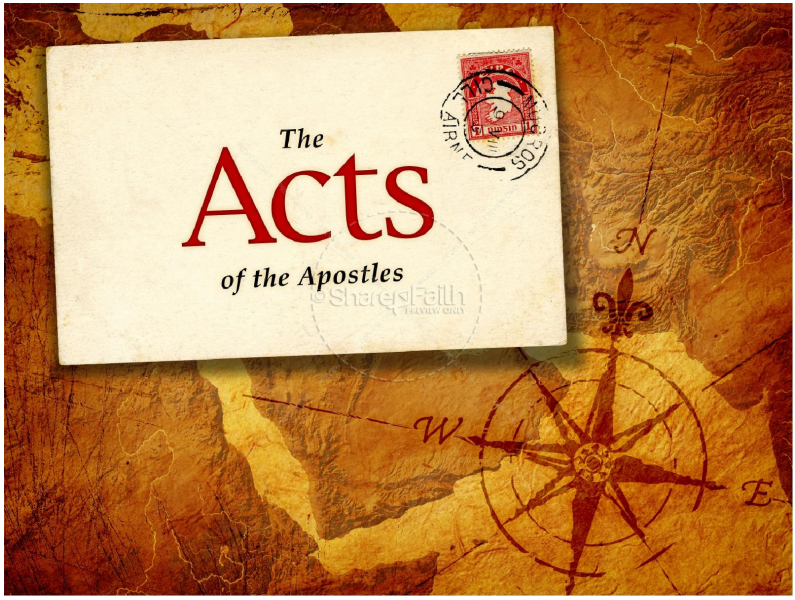
A Guided Inductive Study of the Book of Acts



"Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
2 Timothy 2:15

A practical study of the Book of Acts

by Pastor Richard W. LaFountain

How To Study

Read the Scripture:
Reading the Scripture is important. Read every word. Don't skip. Don't just read your favorite verses. Read it all. Think about what you are reading. Is there any word or statement you do not understand? Is there anything that confuses you or seems inconsistent with other Scriptures? Is there anything you would like to research? Use at least two translations.

Translations:
I suggest New King James, if you like the old wording. The New International Version is helpful. And the English Standard Version is also refreshing. For this study I am using the NKJV because I grew up with KJV and its rhythms are familiar to me. You can use other translations.

Chapter by Chapter:
We are going to study the Book of Romans chapter by chapter. Some chapters are longer and have much to think about. Those chapters we have divided into segments so you cover Romans 8 in four weeks instead of one week. We assume you will use one chapter each week. If you are using this for daily readings then you might find it too difficult to answer the questions. That's okay. My hope, however, is that you use is in a weekly Bible study. Anyone can lead it.

Highlighted Verses:
I have chosen to highlight what I feel are key verses. You may think others are more important. That is okay. Write that in your personal journal or if you are studying in a group write down other verses you feel are important. Oh, and every chapter has one key verse.

Discussion Questions:
We have not attempted to add commentary because we believe the Scriptures speak for themselves and the Holy

Spirit can teach us as much as another person's commentary. I have added suggested questions to answer and discuss. This is especially helpful when studying with a group. You are not limited to my questions, ask your own. In a self-directed study it will be harder to consider your answers to the questions. In a group, however, one question might stimulate other questions. You do not have to answer every question. Use what is helpful and useful and leave the rest.

Personal Edification:
I have often taught my students to look for certain things in ever chapter of the Bible. You will not find all five in every chapter, but you should be able to find two or three. Write them down in a journal or share it with a group. It is called the PEPSI acronym.

Search for Treasure: (P.E.P.S.I.)

- A **P**-romise to claim.
- An **E**-xample to follow.
- A **P**-rayer concern.
- A **S**-in to avoid.
- An **I**-nstruction to obey.

Personal Questions:

- What Verse Challenged you?
- What Verse Encouraged you?
- What Verse Convicted you?
- What Verse Confused you?
- What Verse Startled you?
- What Verse Frightened you?

Group Questions:

1. What verse stands out to you in this chapter? Why?
2. What verse causes you to struggle with its demand? Why?
3. What verse encourages your faith the most? Why?
4. Is there a command here you find most difficult to obey? Why?
5. Is there a promise here you want to claim? What?
6. Is there something you need to pray about in this passage? Why?
7. Is there a word / topic here you need to explore more deeply? What?

Welcome to the Book of Acts

Acts of the Apostles is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. Dr. Luke wrote these two treatises for a Roman called Theophilus. He carefully researched and interviewed eye witness accounts of Jesus life and ministry. He's the only one to give us the missing details of Jesus birth. Being a medical doctor you'll find his medical diagnoses throughout.

Acts is an exciting account of the early church, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and especially Paul's conversion and ministry. Though it is not a theological work you will find rich truths and life applications throughout. Reading Acts will take us to Easter.

Outline of Acts

Chapter 1 – The Promise
Chapter 2 – The Holy Spirit Came
Chapter 3 – Faith in His Name
Chapter 4 – Many Believed
Chapter 5 – They Preached Jesus
Chapter 6 – God's Priorities
Chapter 7 – Stephen's Defense
Chapter 8 – Hearts Are Revealed
Chapter 9 – Saul's Conversion
Chapter 10 – Gentiles Get Saved
Chapter 11 – The Holy Spirit's Work
Chapter 12 – Persecution
Chapter 13 – When the Spirit Speaks
Chapter 14 – You Will Be Persecuted
Chapter 15 – By Faith Alone
Chapter 16 – Miraculous Encounters
Chapter 17 – The Unknown God
Chapter 18 – The Art of Persuasion
Chapter 19 – Ephesus Adventures
Chapter 20 – Farewell to Ephesus
Chapter 21 – The Holy Spirit's Warnings
Chapter 22 – Paul's Testimony
Chapter 23 – Paul Attacked and Accused
Chapter 24 – Paul's Accusers
Chapter 25 – Paul Appeals to Caesar
Chapter 26 – Paul's Answer to Agrippa
Chapter 27 – Shipwrecked
Chapter 28 – Paul in Rome

Acts 1 – The Promise

Key verses to think about.

1:4 Wait for the Promise
Being assembled together with *them,* He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said,* "you have heard from Me;

1:8 You Will Receive Power
"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

1:11 Jesus Will Come Again
"Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

Main Truth:

God has promised the Holy Spirit and power for all believers.

Glean from each chapter answers to these questions. Keeping a daily journal is the best way to record your thoughts and impressions from the Holy Spirit.

Questions:

1 What is the Holy Spirit to enable them to do? Is that true for all believers?

2 What are some other evidences of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer?

3 Gazing up into heaven evidently is not what Jesus had in mind for the believers. What were they to do? Are all of us to do the same?

4. How do you know if you have the Holy Spirit?

Private Notes:

Acts 2 - The Holy Spirit Came.

Key verses to think about.

2:2-4 Tongues of Fire
Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

2:22-24 Purpose & Foreknowledge
“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

2:32-33 The Promise
“This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.”

2:36-37 Cut to the Heart
“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this,* they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?”

2:38-39 Repent and Be Baptized
Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

Main thought:
The Holy Spirit came!

Questions:

1 Does everyone need a Pentecost? Should all of us have a rushing mighty wind, visible tongues of fire, and the gift of tongues? What is your proof of your opinion?

2 Compare Acts 2:4 to 1 Cor. 12-14. Do all speak in tongues? Explain Acts 19:2 and Ephesians 5:18.

3 How can you tell if someone has been filled with the Holy Spirit?

4 Can you explain foreknowledge and God's determined purposes? How about explaining God's election?

Private Notes:

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Acts 3 - Faith in His Name

Key verses to think about.

3:6 In the Name of Jesus
Then Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.”

3:12 Not by Might nor by Our Power
So when Peter saw *it,* he responded to the people: “Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?

3:16 Faith in His Name
“His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

3:19 Repent!
“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

3:26 To Bless You
“God, has raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one *of you* from your iniquities.”

Main Truth:

The name of Jesus saves. There is no other name and no other means by which anyone can be saved.

Questions:

1 What is the first command of the Gospel message?

2 What is the second command?

3 Healing came through Jesus only. It was not by the apostles' power of godliness that a man was healed. Too often we look to gifted faith healers and not to the Lord. Have you ever seen anyone immediately healed? Tell us about it.

4 How much faith do you have in the name of Jesus? Is healing by faith in our faith, or faith is someone else's faith?

Private Notes:

Acts 4 - Many Believed

Key verses to think about.

4:4 Many heard and believed
However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

4:10 By the Name of Jesus
“Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.”

4:13 They had been with Jesus
Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

4:29-30 Grant Boldness
“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”

4:31 The Place Was Shaken
When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

4:33 Great Grace, Great Power
With great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

Main Truth:

Boldness comes from the Holy Spirit's infilling.

Questions:

1 What was the result of being filled with the Spirit? (Hint: It's not tongues.)

2 What marked the disciples? What impressed the Jews about the disciples?

3 Do you have boldness to speak the word and proclaim Jesus name? When? Where? How often? If not, why not?

4 What did the disciples ask the Lord for? Are you asking the same?

Private Notes:

Acts 5 - They Preached Jesus

Key verses to think about.

5:3 Lying to the Holy Spirit
But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part of* the price of the land for yourself?

5:12 Many Signs and Wonders
Through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch.

5:14-15 Peter’s Shadow
And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them on* beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them.

5:16 All Were Healed
Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

5:18-20 Go, Stand, Preach!
They laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, “Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.”

5:29 We Ought to Obey God
But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

5:41-42 Preaching Jesus Daily
So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as the* Christ.

Main Truth:

We ought to obey God's rules rather than man's rules.

Questions:

1 Have you ever lied? When? Have you ever lied to the Holy Spirit? When? About what?

2 Have you ever held back God's tithe for yourself? Do you even tithe? If not, why not? Is your motive for not tithing against legalism, or is it selfish greed? Is tithing legalism?

3 Can you think of an instance in today's society when you ought to obey God rather than men? Explain. What rules of today's culture are against God?

4 Have you ever suffered for Jesus name? When? How did you suffer?

Private Notes:

Acts 6 - God's Priorities

Key verses to think about.

6:2 We Will Not Leave the Word of God
"It is not right that we should leave the word of God and serve tables."

6:4 We Will Give Ourselves to Prayer
"We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

6:7 The Word of God Spread
Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

6:10 They Could Not Resist Their Wisdom
And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.

Main Truth:

We (pastors) should give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word.

Questions:

1 What is to be the priority of pastors in every age?

2 What does it mean to be "Obedient to the faith"?

3 Stephen reasoned with men about his faith. Do you? When? Where?

4 Is it necessary for all believers to give a reasoned answer for their faith? Can you? When? Where? How often? Ever? Acts 7 - Stephen's Defense

Private Notes:

Acts 7 - Stephen's Defense

Key verses to think about.

7:30-33 Holy Ground
And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lords appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. When Moses saw *it,* he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, *saying, 'I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'* And Moses trembled and dared not look. *'Then the LORD said to him, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.*

7:42 God gave them up
Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven…

7:48 God does dwell on temples
"However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands."

7:51 Resisting the Holy Spirit
"*You* stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did,* so *do* you.

7:55-56 The Right Hand of God
But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

Main Truth:

God does not dwell in temples made with hands.

Questions:

1 Have you ever experienced holy ground? Or experienced the visible tangible Shekinah glory of God? Where and where?

2 Where else have you read that “God gave them up”? What does that mean? (See Roman’s 1)

3 We can resist, grieve, quench, and/or blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Can you give an example of each?

Private Notes:

Acts 8 – Hearts Are Revealed

Key verses to think about.

8:1-3 Saul's Heart
Now Saul was consenting to his (Stephen's) death… 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.

8:6-8 Crowds See, Hear, Believe
And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.

8:17-19 Simon's Lust for Power
Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

8:20-23 Peter's Response
But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

Main Truth:

Miracles followed hearing, heeding and seeing the gospel in action.

Questions:

1 Why do you think Simon thought that money could buy him power and influence?

2 Why did Peter say, “Your money perish with you.”? Would you ever tell someone that? Why or why not?

3 Why did Peter accused/condemned Simon of being “full of bitterness and captive to sin.”? Would you ever be so bold as to accuse someone to their face? Have you ever? Have you ever wanted to?

4 “Unclean spirits came out of ‘many’”— why do you think so many people had unclean spirits? Do people today have unclean spirits hovering around them? What do unclean spirits feed on? What attracts them?

Private Notes:

Acts 9 - Saul's Conversion

Key verses to think about.

9:1-2 Saul the Murderer
Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

9:4-5 Saul Converted
He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.

9:12-13 Ananias Sent to Saul
"In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem."

9:17-18 Saul Healed
Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized.

9:32-34 Aeneas Healed by Peter
As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up.

9:36-41 Dead Tabitha Raised by Peter
In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was

washed and placed in an upstairs room. Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, “Please come at once!” Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room… Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive.

Main Truth:

When God sends any one to pray for someone’s healing, there’s no risk or fear of failure because God commanded it.

Questions:

1 If you were Ananias would you have gone to pray for a violent criminal? A Muslim terrorist? A murderer of your friend?

2 Would you ever risk commanding a paralyzed person to get up? How would you know the Lord would heal him?

3 Would you ever risk telling a dead person to get up? How would you know the Lord told you to do it?

4 In each healing case (Saul, Aeneas, and Dorcas) there was a risk that it might not happen. Do you think Ananias and/or Peter had any doubts or fear of failure? Would you have any doubts?

Private Notes:

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Acts 10 - Gentiles Get Saved

Key verses to think about.

10:3-4 An Angel Appears to Cornelius
One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!” Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked. The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.

10:9 Peter went up on the roof to pray.

10:19-20 Peter’s Vision
While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”

10:34-35 Peter Realizes No Favoritism with God
Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.

10:44-46 The Holy Spirit Fell on Them
While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Main Truth:

God speaks to many of us when we are praying.

Questions:

1 Your prayers are recorded in heaven. He remembers your prayers. Discuss Psalm 56:8. How big is your prayer account?

2 Your alms, or sacrificial giving, is recorded in heaven. Discuss Malachi 3:10 and 3:16. God remembers and records everything. How is your account in heaven?

3 Does this story prove the Holy Spirit always comes with tongues? (The word “tongues” here refers to human languages, not glossolalia or angelic languages.) Why, or why not? (See Acts 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)

Private Notes:

Acts 11 – The Holy Spirit's Work

Key verses to think about.

11:10 God Speaks thru Visions
"The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'10 This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again."

11:12 The Holy Spirit Speaks
The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them.

11:15 The Holy Spirit Descends
"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning."

11:16 The Holy Spirit Baptizes
Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

11:21 God's Hand is Seen
The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

11:23-24 Full of the Spirit
When he (Barnabas) arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

11:28 The Holy Spirit Speaks thru Men
One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world.

Main Truth:
The Holy Spirit speaks!

Questions:

1 Have you heard the Holy Spirit's whisper?

2 Have you ever had a vision for God?

3 Have you ever had an angelic visit?

4 Has the Holy Spirit ever spoken to you through someone else?

5 "He that has ears let him HEAR what the Spirit says to the church." Are you listening for the Spirit's still small voice?

Private Notes:

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Commentary:

Holy Spirit's Voice
There was a reason Jesus sent the Holy Spirit upon his disciples. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of Jesus Christ and the Father resting on His children. It is Christ's way of abiding with us forever. A primary work of the Spirit is to speak to us about the things of God. In my study of the Holy Spirit, I have discovered and listed 75 works of the Holy Spirit. Of those 75 at least 22 are specific to Him speaking to us and through us. I will give you my listing, but you must search the scriptures to make sure these things are so.

1. Spirit Speaks to, in, through us. - Matthew 10:20, Acts 2:4
2. Spirit Gives us words to say. - Mark 13:11
3. Spirit Reminds us what Jesus said. - John 14:26
4. Spirit Teaches us all things. - John 14:26
5. Spirit Convicts. - John 16:8
6. Spirit Guides. - John 16:13
7. Spirit Testifies of Jesus. - John 15:26 and 16:14
8. Spirit Reveals Christ. - John 16:14-15
9. Spirit Reveals things to come. - John 16:15, Luke 2:26,
10. Spirit Comforts us. - Acts 9:31
11. Spirit Appoints missionaries. - Acts 13:2 (sets apart)
12. Spirit Appoints overseers (elders). - Acts 20:28-32
13. Spirit Warns us. - Acts 20:23
14. Spirit Bears witness with our spirit. - Romans 8:16
15. Spirit Reveals deep things of God. - 1 Corinthians 2:10
16. Spirit Knows God's thoughts. - 1 Corinthians 2:11
17. Spirit Reveals what God has given us. - 1 Corinthians 2:12
18. Spirit Teaches us to pray. - 1 Corinthians 14:15, Ephesians 6:18
19. Spirit Reveals mysteries. - Ephesians 3:4-5
20. Spirit Speaks. - 1 Timothy 4:1
21. Spirit Speaks to the church. - Revelation 2:29
22. Spirit Says, "Come Lord Jesus." - Revelation 22:17
23. Spirit Whispers. - Isaiah 30:21, Mark 13:11

Again, I want to emphasize the importance that the Holy Spirit is a person, not a vague influence. He is not an impersonal force like gravity or an abstract, invisible force. He has intellect, emotions, and a will of his own.

As a person He can speak, be insulted, grieved, quenched, blasphemed, resisted, tested, and he can withdraw himself from us.

Acts 12 - Persecution

Key verses to think about.

12:1-3 James Killed by Sword
Now about that time Herod the king stretched out *his* hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also.

12:4-5 Peter Arrested
So when he had arrested him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.

12:7 Angel Released Peter
Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by *him,* and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, “Arise quickly!” And his chains fell off *his* hands.

12:12-16 Faithless Prayer Meeting
So, when he had considered *this,* he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter’s voice, because of *her* gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. But they said to her, “You are beside yourself!” Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, “It is his angel.” Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened *the door* and saw him, they were astonished.

12:21-23 Herod’s Death by Worms
So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, “The voice of a god and not of a man!” Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.

Main Truth:

Sometimes we pray but fail to believe God will do miracles.

Questions:

1 Why do you think God rescued Peter, but not James?

2 What do you think the people were praying for since they were shocked at Peter's deliverance?

3 Are you curious for more background on the death of Herod Agrippa I?

Private Notes:

Commentary:

Josephus's Account (*Antiquities* 19.343–350): Josephus adds detail, noting that Herod wore a robe made entirely of silver that dazzled in the morning sun. He reports that Herod was seized with violent abdominal pains that lasted for five days before he finally passed away at age 54.

https://www.julianspriggs.co.uk/pages/Josephus_AgrippaDeath#:~:text=On%20the%20second%20day%20of,be%20hurried%20away%20by%20death

Josephus Quote

“On the second day of which shows he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theater early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him; and presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place, and another from another, (though not for his good,) that he was a god; and they added, "Be thou merciful to us; for although we have hitherto reverenced thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature."

Upon this the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery. But as he presently afterward looked up, he saw an owl (22) sitting on a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings to him; and fell into the deepest sorrow.

A severe pain also arose in his belly, and began in a most violent manner. He therefore looked upon his friends, and said, "I, whom you call a god, am commanded presently to depart this life; while Providence thus reproves the lying words you just now said to me; and I, who was by you called immortal, am immediately to be hurried away by death…And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and in the seventh year of his reign;”

Acts 13 - When the Spirit Speaks

Key verses to think about.

13:2 The Holy Spirit Speaks
As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

13:4 The Holy Spirit Sends
So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

13:8-12 The Sorcerer Blinded
But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Then Saul, who also *is called* Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, *you* son of the devil, *you* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.” And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

38-39 Paul’s Sermon
“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

44-46 Jews Rejected Jesus
On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.

Main Truth:

When the Spirit speaks, things happen.

Questions:

1 Have you ever heard the Holy Spirit speak to you when you were praying? Share that experience.

2 How do you know whether it is the Spirit speaking or your imagination?

3 What do you do when someone rejects the gospel you've shared with them? Do you curse them as Paul did?

4 Have you, or any preacher you know, ever said to an unbeliever, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, *you* son of the devil, *you* enemy of all righteousness"? Why not? What is the difference between Paul and Peter saying this, and a preacher today?

Private Notes:

Acts 14 - You Will Be Persecuted

Key verses to think about.

14:3 They Spoke Boldly
Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

14:5 They Were Threatened
When a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, and they were preaching the gospel there.

14:8-10 Crippled Man Healed
In Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. *This* man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked.

14:19-20 Paul Stoned to Death?
Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

14:21-22 They Returned To Strengthen Believers
They returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying,* "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

Main Truth:

You will be persecuted when you publicly stand up for Christ.

Questions:

1 Have you ever been persecuted for sharing the gospel? When? Where? How? By whom?

2 What are some reactions to the gospel today? (Receive it, think about it, indifference, reject it, get mad at you, get violent, or stone you?)

3 Should we expect signs, wonders and healings as the Apostles experienced? Why don't we experience more miracles?

4 So, if "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God," what are the tribulations you are experiencing for believing in Jesus? Do you experience any difficulties as a result of following Christ? What are they?

5 Why don't we experience more persecution? Maybe we aren't bold enough, vociferous enough, maybe we don't speak to others about Christ?

Private Notes:

Acts 15 - By Faith Alone

Key verses to think about.

15:8-9 God knows the Heart
"So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did to* us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."

15:11 By Grace Alone
"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

15:18 "Known to God from eternity are all His works."

15:28-29 No Greater Burden
"For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well."

Main Truth:

We are saved by grace through faith alone, without the works of the law.

Questions:

1 Are there churches today that add requirements of laws, rules or regulations to be saved? What are those legalistic rules?

2 Through "grace alone" we are saved. Can you give other biblical verses that support this? What are they? (Hint: Ephesians 2:8-9)

3 Do you think it was fair for the Apostles, who taught "by grace through faith alone" to add "abstain from blood, and things strangled" to salvations requirements? Why do you think they did that?

4 Based on that text, should we avoid eating blood pudding?

5 Some churches require worship on the Sabbath, which is Saturday. Is this legalism? Can you give supporting verses? (Hint: Colossians 2:16)

6 Are the keeping the 10 Commandments a requirement for salvation? Prove it. (Hint: Galatians 3:24-25)

7 Is baptism required for salvation? Prove it.

Private Notes:

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Acts 16 - Miraculous Encounters

Key verses to think about.

16:6 The Spirit Forbid Them
Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.

16:7 The Spirit Said, No!
After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.

16:9 Come Over and Help Us
And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”

16:10 Paul Figured it Out
Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

16:13-15 Close Encounters
On the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there.* Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us.* She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she begged *us,* saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.

16:16-18 Weird Encounters
A certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” She did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour.

Main Truth:

Sometimes God has plans we know nothing about.

Questions:

1 Why would the Spirit forbid them to preach in a city? (Your opinion)

2 Why and how would the Holy Spirit say, “No” to preaching in Bythynia (or anywhere else)?

3 Paul had a vision of Macedonia and concluded or “assuredly gathered” (Greek “sumbibazo” meaning out together) they were to go there. What is the difference between a dream and a vision?

4 Should you let your dreams guide your decisions? Is that wise? How can you tell if it’s the Lord speaking or your undigested pizza?

5 How do you figure out the will of God when it’s not clear what to do?

Private Notes:

Acts 17 - To the Unknown God

Key verses to think about.

17:2-4 Persuasive Preaching
Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying,* "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ. And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

17:6 Turn the World Upside Down
But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.

17:10 Exit, Stage Left
Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.

17:11 Search the Scriptures!
When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so.

17:14-15 Run, Forest, Run!
Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there. So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.

17:17 Paul in the Athens Marketplace
Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.

17:19 Paul in the Areopagus

They took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine *is* of which you speak?

17:23 To the Unknown God
“As I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:”

Main Truth:

Persuasive preaching turns the world upside down.

Questions:

1 Paul used “persuasive preaching.” We don’t hear many persuasive sermons these days. Why?

2 What was the last persuasive and/or convicting sermon you’ve heard? What made it persuasive and convicting?

3 Have you ever thought of using a cultural story? Myth, movie or book as a springboard to preach Christ? What would you use to gain their interest?

4 Do you know the story of *Epimenides* and the Unknown God? Please look it up. It’s fascinating!

Commentary:
Note 1:
The Areopagus, also known as Mars Hill, is a rocky hill in Athens, Greece, located northwest of the Acropolis, famous as the meeting place for the city's ancient council and high court, and as the site where the Apostle Paul preached Christianity. It was the location for trials of serious crimes like homicide.

Note 2:
Paul knew the story of *Epimenides* and used it as a springboard to preach Christ. Look it up!

Private Notes:

Acts 18 - The Art of Persuasion

Key verses to think about.

18:1 Arrival in Corinth
After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth.

18:4 Persuading Many to Believe
He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

18:5 Compelled by the Spirit
When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.

18:8 A Synagugue Ruler Saved
Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

18:9 An Encouaging Vision
Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”

18:12-13 Paul Continues Persuading
When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, “This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”

18:18 Paul Takes a Vow
So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.

18:24-26 Apollos Converted
Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being

fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

Main Truth:

Paul was compelled by the Spirit to persuade men that Jesus is the Christ.

Questions:

1 Do you persuade men to worship God? How do you do that? Do you persuade anyone to believe?

2 Long before people were converted God told Paul he “had many people in this city.” How could they be called God’s people even before receiving Christ? What does that say about Election, Foreknowledge and Calling?

3 Paul later writes two letters to the church at Corinth. They were a troubled church with many problems. Name some.

Private Notes:

Acts 19 - Ephesus Adventures

Key verses to think about.

19:2 Have You Received the Spirit?
He (Paul) he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

19:6 Holy Spirit Descended
And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

19:9-10 Two Years Preaching
But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

19:11-12 Unusual Miracles
Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.

19:13-16 Beat Up by Demons
Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.” And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

19:18-19 Deliverance & Revival
And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned *them* in the sight of all. And they

counted up the value of them, and *it* totaled fifty thousand *pieces* of silver.

19 23-27 A Riot in Ephesus
About that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. 27 He said, “So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship.”

19:34 -35 Diana of the Ephesians
But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, “Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!” And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: “Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Zeus?

Main Truth:
Whenever the Spirit works the devil works.

Questions:

1 Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? Don’t all believers have the Holy Spirit?

2 What is the difference between having the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit?

3 How can you tell if someone is filled with the Spirit?

4 What is the greatest miracle you’ve experienced or witnessed?

5 Have you ever been persecuted? How did that happen?

6 Demons recognized Paul. Do they recognize and fear you? If not, why not?

Private Notes:

Acts 20 - Farewell to Ephesus

Key verses to think about.

20:9-11 Eutychus Falls Asleep
And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing *him* said, “Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him.” Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

20:22-23 Chains and Tribulations
“And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.”

20:24 I Count Not My Life Dear
But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

20:27-28 The Whole Counsel of God
“For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

20:29-31 The Danger of Wolves
“For I know this that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”

20:31 Tearful Preaching
“Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”

Main Truth:

Passionate preaching often requires tears and troubles.

Questions:

1 Have you ever fallen asleep in church?

2 Do you get upset when the preacher goes beyond 12 noon, or past the normal quitting time?

3 What does Paul mean by “the whole counsel of God”?

4 Have you ever experienced wolves in church? When? Where? What were they like?

5 If you knew that trials and tribulation were ahead, would you still go?

6 It seems that Paul was warned by the prophets and Holy Spirit not to go to Jerusalem, was he wrong to ignore those warning and press on with his plans?

7 Should preachers be brief and without tears?

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Acts 21 - Holy Spirit Warnings

Key verses to think about.

21:4 Pau; Warned by the Spirit
And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.

21:11 Agabus Warns Paul
When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.' "

21:13-14 The Stubbornness of Paul
Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

21:30 The Riot Starts
And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.

32-34 Paul Arrested
And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another. So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks.

21:33 Bound with Chains
Then the commander came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done.

Main Truth:

When the Spirit warns you, listen!

Questions:

1 Was Paul wrong not to listen to the Holy Spirit's warnings?

2 Why would the Holy Spirit warn him so often if it were not tell him not to go to Jerusalem?

3 Was Paul stubborn, stupid or suicidal? Why wouldn't you listen to the Holy Spirit?

4 What would you do if the Spirit and the while church warned you not to go somewhere?

5 Romans 12 exhorts us "to prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Is there a GOOD will of God, an ACCEPTIBLE will of God, and a PERFECT will of God? And are we free to choose?

Private Notes:

Acts 22 - Paul's Testimony

Key verses to think about.

22:17-18, 21 Jesus Warned Paul
"Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance and saw Him saying to me, 'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.'

21:21 Jesus sent Paul to Gentiles
"Then He said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.' "

21:25 Paul, a Roman Citizen
And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

Main Truth:

Paul arrested in Jerusalem, just as the Spirit warned him would happen.

Questions:

1 If Paul was warned by Jesus to leave Jerusalem, and his own testimony was that he was the Apostle to the Gentiles, and the Holy Spirit and the church warmed him not to go to Jerusalem, why would he go anyway?

2 Was Paul disobedient to the Holy Spirit? Are we allowed to ignore the Spirit and choose our own way?

3 If Paul could do it and get away with it, why can't we?

4 How do we determine the will of God? What does God's word teach us?

Acts 23 - Paul Attacked and Accused

Key verses to think about.

23:3 Paul Accuses Them
Then Paul said to him, “God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?”

23:9 Pharisees Protect Paul
Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees’ party arose and protested, saying, “We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God.”

23:11 Jesus Speaks
But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”

23:12-13 An Assassination Plan
And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy.

23:16 The Plot Revealed
So when Paul’s sister’s son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul.

23-25 Paul’s Escape
He called for two centurions, saying, “Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at the third hour of the night; and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring him safely to Felix the governor.”

23:35 Paul in the Praetorium
He said, “I will hear you when your accusers also have come.” And he commanded him to be kept in Herod’s Praetorium.

Main Truth:

Just as Paul was attacked and accused so the devil accuses us daily before the throne.

Questions:

1 Do you think Paul was rude to call them a whitewashed wall? Didn't Jesus do the same? Should we?

2 Do Jesus' words to Paul exonerate his disobedience to the Spirit's warnings? Was he disobedient to the Spirit in going to Jerusalem?

3 What is your defense when Satan accuses you before the throne? (See Zechariah 3:1-5 and Revelation 12:10-11, 1 John 3:20)

4 Has Jesus ever spoken directly to you through a vision or a dream? Have you ever heard his comforting voice within you?

5 How can you discern Jesus' voice from the whispers of the enemy?

Private Notes:

Acts 24 - Paul's Accusers

Key verses to think about.

24:1 The Trial
Now after five days Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator *named* Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul.

24:5 The Accusation
"For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes."

24:10-16 Paul's Answer
Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: "Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of *the* dead, both of *the* just and *the* unjust. This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men

24:23 Paul's Liberty to Have Visitors
So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let *him have* liberty, and told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.

24:25 A More Convenient Day
Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."

25:27 Two Years in Prison
But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.

Main Truth:

Be ready always to give an answer to those who question your faith.

Questions:

1 Have you ever been called on to publicly defend your faith?

2 Have you ever had to privately defend your faith?

3 Have you ever written out your testimony of faith in Jesus Christ? Why not do that today? Tell your Jesus encounter story.

4 If you had to give an answer for the reason of the hope you have in Christ, what would you say?

5 If you had to earnestly contend for your faith, what would you say? What would be your argument or your defense? (Jude 1:3)

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1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Jude 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Private Notes:

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Acts 25 - Paul Appeals to Caesar

Key verses to think about.

25:7 Serious Complaints
When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove,

25:10-11 Appeal to Caesar
So Paul said, “I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.”

Main Truth:

Where are your accusers? Satan accused us before the throne day and night.

Questions:

1 Has anyone ever made serious complaints against you for any reason? For your faith? For your political view? For your behavior? For your words?

2 Can you say, “I am innocent of any wrongdoing”? Have you ever been accused of wrongdoing?

3 Have you ever been afraid to die? Are you afraid to die now? Why or why not?

2 Timothy 3:11 Yes, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Matthew 5:11-12 Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your

reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Luke 12:10-11 And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take you no thought how or what thing you will answer, or what you shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you ought to say.

Private Notes:

Acts 26 - Paul's Answer to Agrippa

Key verses to think about.

26:6 Judged for the Hope
"And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers."

26:8 God Raises the Dead
"Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?"

26:17-18 Turn Men from Darkness
Jesus said 'I will deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well as *from* the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

26:22-23 Help from God
"Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come—that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles."

26:28 Almost Persuaded
Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

26:29 Paul Wished He Would Be Altogether Persuaded
Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

Main Truth:

We do the preaching, the Spirit does the persuading.

Questions:

1 What persuaded you to be a Christian?

2 What arguments, reasonings, or scriptures do you use when presenting the Gospel?

3 Do you ever present the Gospel to unbelievers? Do you ever mention Christ to unbelievers? Why, or why not?

4 Have you ever led anyone to Christ? Who? When? How often do you witness?

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1 Peter 3:15 Be Ready
“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”

Luke 9:26 Are You Ashamed?
“Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.”

Private Notes:

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Acts 27 - Shipwrecked

Key verses to think about.

27:1 Sailing for Rome
And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment.

27:9-10 Dangerous Journey
Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, saying, “Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives.”

13-14 A Hurricane
When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon.

27:42 A Plot to Kill
And the soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape.

43-44 A Kind Centurion
But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from *their purpose*, and commanded that those who could swim should jump *overboard* first and get to land, and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land.

Main Truth:

John 16:33 “In the world you will have trouble”
Job 5:7 “Man is born for trouble as the sparks fly upward”
Acts 14:22 22 “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”

Questions:

1 Why does God allow believers to suffer so many trials? (Read Job 2:10)

2 Can you list your trials as Paul did in 2 Corinthians 1:4-5, 4:7-12, 6:4-20, 11:23-30? (Read these, then list your own trials.)

3 Now list your blessings. (Read Psalm 103:1-3)

4 What have you been crying, bemoaning or complaining about today?

Private Notes:

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Acts 28 - Paul in Rome

Key verses to think about.

28:1 Island of Malta
Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta.

28:3,& 5 A Viper Bite
But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid *them* on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm.

28:8 Healing the Sick
And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.

28:16 Arrived at Rome
Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.

28:23-24 Preaching to Jews
So when they had appointed him a day, many (Jews) came to him at *his* lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.

28:30-31 Two Years House Arrest
Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

Main Truth:

There are no accidents with God. Every storm serves His purpose.

Questions:

1 Do you think Paul ever felt discouraged with all the things that went wrong for him?

2 Do you get discouraged when bad things happen to you?

(Paul's trials and victories including this viper attack are evidently referred to in Mark 16:17-18 "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.")

Commentary:

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"The rest of the story"

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We are left wondering what happened to Paul. The Bible does not tell us the rest of the story.

After Acts 28, the Apostle Paul was likely released from his two-year house arrest in Rome (circa AD 62–64), resumed missionary work—possibly visiting Spain and the Aegean region—before being re-arrested and martyred by beheading under Emperor Nero in Rome, likely around AD 64–67.

It is widely believed Paul was acquitted after his appeal to Caesar, allowing him to travel again. He likely fulfilled his long-held desire to visit Spain, as suggested by 1 Clement 5 (written c. AD 95) which states he reached the "farthest limits of the West".

During this period of freedom, Paul likely visited Crete (leaving Titus there, Titus 1:5), Ephesus (leaving Timothy there, 1 Timothy 1:3), and potentially Macedonia and Nicopolis, as described in the letters to Timothy and Titus.

Following the Great Fire of Rome in AD 64, Nero initiated severe persecution of Christians. Paul was likely arrested again and imprisoned in Rome, this time in harsher conditions (possibly Mamertine Prison) rather than private house arrest.

While in prison, he wrote 2 Timothy, expressing that his "departure" was imminent (2 Timothy 4:6). He was executed on the Via Ostiense around AD 64-67 by a Roman soldier at the command of Nero. Since he was a Roman citizen he was not crucified or thrown to the lions as other saints.

Private Notes: