



# ADVANCE

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

PART 2

STORIES OF MISSION

# UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY 15 - FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP EVENT  
SATURDAY 10A - 12P  
FREEDOM CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

JULY 29 - NEXT STEPS CLASS  
SATURDAY 9A - 12P  
FREEDOM CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

SEPTEMBER 6 - NIGHT OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP  
WEDNESDAY 6:30P - 8P  
FREEDOM CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

SEPTEMBER 10 - CG CONNECT  
SUNDAY DURING THE 9A AND 11A GATHERINGS  
FREEDOM CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

SEPTEMBER 17 - SERVICE TEAM CONNECT  
SUNDAY DURING THE 9A AND 11A GATHERINGS  
FREEDOM CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

OCTOBER 15 - BAPTISM SUNDAY  
SUNDAY DURING THE 9A AND 11A GATHERINGS  
FREEDOM CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

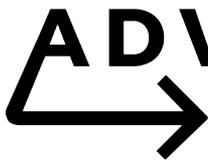
For more information and to RSVP visit:  
[www.veritasfayetteville.com/events](http://www.veritasfayetteville.com/events)

## **WE EXIST FOR THE FAME OF JESUS**

Our Vision is to be a  
church:  
For the City.  
For the Military.  
For the Fame of Jesus.

Our Mission is to make  
disciples who:  
Love God.  
Love People.  
Advance the Gospel.

# ADVANCE



## A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

### WHY FOCUS ON THE BOOK OF ACTS?

What is the church? What should the church be doing? How should we work to advance the gospel and glorify God? All of these are good questions that we will find the answers to as we spend time studying the Book of Acts.

Acts is about men, women, and children encountering the once dead, now risen and reigning author of life: Jesus Christ. Through the church's obedience to Jesus' command, more churches are planted and the gospel is advanced in the midst of opposition and profound suffering. This is the story of the early church. In their story, we will find our story.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ACTS

Acts is part two of a two-volume work (Luke/Acts). If the Gospel of Luke is the beginning of all that Jesus did (Luke 1:1-4), then the Book of Acts is the continuation of what Jesus is doing. It is the story of God's mission going forth, by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the church. As the church in Jerusalem grows and persecution increases, they obey Jesus' command (Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8) and advance the gospel through the planting of new churches.

Look for these key themes as you study the Book of Acts:

- **The mission of God** - This is the focus of the Book of Acts. The missional God is taking the good news of Jesus to the ends of the earth, through the church, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **The sovereignty of God** - God is in complete control over people, places, and events even when it seems like he isn't.
- **The Holy Spirit** - God the Spirit has come to dwell in the people of God to empower them for mission.
- **The church** - The people of God gathered to worship God and scattered to advance the gospel. The church is God's plan A for the advancement of the gospel.
- **Suffering** - This is a massive theme in Acts. God's people, the church, suffer persecution and opposition, and all the while, Jesus continues to build his church.

# ABOUT THIS SERIES GUIDE

This series guide is designed to help you take notes on Sundays and respond to what is heard each week as we walk through the Book of Acts. To help facilitate this, we will provide questions focused on our core values: Truth, Worship, Community, and Mission. These questions will also be used for Community Group discussion, so take notes and bring the booklet with you to Community Group to interact with others.

There are a few reasons we chose to use Truth, Worship, Community, and Mission for the questions for this study guide:

- These are the four core values of Veritas Church.
- They help us think through major areas of discipleship and what it looks like to follow Jesus.
- They lead us to see what is true about God, what is true about us in our brokenness and rebellion, what Jesus has done for us, how we need one another, and how all of this is meant to change how we live in our daily lives for the fame of Jesus.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Each week's Community Group discussion will include four types of questions:



1. TRUTH - Where do we see the truth about God, Jesus, and the gospel in this passage?



2. WORSHIP - What about this passage causes us to worship God?



3. COMMUNITY - Why is it impossible to live this passage out alone?



4. MISSION - How is this passage relevant for the broken world we live in?

# A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTORS

You may not know it, but if you are reading this, you are prayed for. Just by picking up this guide it means that God is already at work to show you more of himself. Our hope is that this series guide will point you to Jesus. Whether you have never read a book of the bible and you are considering the claims for the first time, or you have faithfully read through it many times, we want you to see Jesus. At the beginning of the Book of Acts, Jesus tells his followers to wait for the promised Holy Spirit before they start to fulfill the great commission to go into all the world with the gospel. Before you continue in this series guide, will you stop and pray with us?

Father, help me to read these words of your scriptures with faith and clarity. Forgive my doubting heart. Make the advancement of the good news of Jesus the aim of my life. Fill me with your Holy Spirit to give me understanding and a deeper love for you. Amen.

For the fame of Jesus,  
Your Pastors

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# ADVANCE

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

READ ACTS 6:8-7:60

## DEVOTIONAL

We tend to think of biblical figures like Stephen as spiritual super heroes. Stephen is described in Acts 6:5 as “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit”. Stephen was even chosen as leader within the church to oversee the distribution of food to the Greek-speaking Jewish followers of Jesus. He does great signs and wonders among the people, and he proclaims the gospel at great length through the explanation that Jesus is the righteous one prophesied throughout the Old Testament. Stephen was a man “full of grace and truth,” but the fact remains, he was still just a man. The thing that makes Stephen’s life look different than ours is the thing that actually puts us on the same level as him: being “full of the Holy Spirit”. Because Jesus has sent that same Spirit into our hearts, we can live a life like Stephen, who lived a life and died a death like Jesus.

## QUESTIONS



1. Stephen knows people and his bible well enough to explain that what they were setting their hope in was going to fail them. Why is knowing both of these things important? What was the hope of these men that killed Stephen?



2. Elsewhere in scripture Jesus is described as seated at the right hand of the Father, what could this mean for how Jesus views what is happening to Stephen? What about this should cause us to worship?



3. As Stephen dies, his last words are “Lord, do not hold this sin against them”. How can we be a people like Stephen marked with a love for others that endures even in the face of harm or death?



4. What was Stephen’s aim in making this speech before the council of elders? How can we remain full of the Holy Spirit as Stephen was?



# ADVANCE

## A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

### READ ACTS 8:1-40

### DEVOTIONAL

It is our responsibility to obey God with the help of the Spirit, and part of that obedience is being faithful in everyday discipleship and preparation. For example, a student called to be a doctor is not in school just for the degree. He or she is there to faithfully study and prepare for what the degree represents. Philip had knowledge of God's word because he was in a daily relationship with the Lord and studied scripture. If we are to be ready for God's call on our lives, then we must be faithful in the daily preparation where he has called us today. We should actively pray that we are on mission wherever we are.

### QUESTIONS



1. Read Acts 8:4-8. How does the mission of God bring joy and renewal wherever it goes? How is this the case when persecution is occurring (Acts 13:48-52; 2 Cor. 7:4; 1 Thess. 1:6)?



2. Read Acts 8:9-25. In this passage, what evidence points to Simon being truly converted and what evidence points to his belief being fake?



3. God, through the Spirit, led Philip to speak to this eunuch about the gospel. What does this indicate about God's desire for the nations and his value for the outcast?



4. How can we prepare in the times when we are "waiting" for a special direction from God? How can we be faithful in what appears to be everyday, mundane activities? How are our everyday, mundane activities actually special direction from God when we are being obedient to him?



# ADVANCE

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

READ ACTS 8:1-4, 9:1-32

## DEVOTIONAL

Have you ever had a person hate you? For many of us, coldness towards us is as far as most people go to express their dislike for us. Saul was not just a hater of followers of Jesus, he pursued them to the point of capturing them as prisoners and even killing them. He participated in the death of Stephen, and Jesus himself calls him a 'persecutor of Jesus and his people'. Yet Jesus pursues him and calls Saul to himself. Even in the sending of Ananias, a man who was not keen on trusting Saul at first, God demonstrates his love for us by redeeming even the most radical terrorist.

## QUESTIONS



1. Read Acts 9:3-18. When did Saul know that Jesus was God? When did Saul submit to Jesus as Lord?



2. Read Acts 9:13-16. What does it tell us about God that he has plans for Saul, a man actively engaged in outright persecution of followers of Jesus?



3. After coming to faith in Jesus, where does Saul go? How does this illustrate our need for community with other followers of Jesus?



4. When you think of being obedient to God on mission, how do think that it may be going into potentially dangerous situations? (Ex. Ananias going to Saul, a man who could have been waiting to kill him)



# ADVANCE

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

READ ACTS 9:32-11:18

## DEVOTIONAL

In this story, the clear plan of God is to save for himself a people of all tribes, tongues, and nations, but this plan was not so clear to Jesus' disciples. Peter receives the vision nonetheless and preaches the gospel to a cultural outsider, a Gentile. This Gentile named Cornelius is described as "a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God". Yet Cornelius needed the gospel and God chose to bring the good news of Jesus to him in a miraculous way. If we are not careful, we can slowly start to believe that morally good people are automatically approved of by God. In this story God demonstrates that not only do those people need the good news of the gospel, but also God is willing to go to great lengths to make sure they hear and respond to it.

## QUESTIONS



1. Read 10:34-43. What specific aspects of the gospel does Peter preach to Cornelius and his family? What specific parts do you think were important for them as Gentiles to hear?



2. Do you find it easy to "extol God" in public like the people in Acts 10:46? Why or why not?



3. After Peter baptizes the new followers of Jesus, he is asked to stay in their house. How does following Jesus create family where there were once barriers (social, cultural, religious)?



4. Like Cornelius, there are many people who are ready to hear and receive the gospel if we simply share it with them. Who are there people in your life that you believe are like this?

# NOTES

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# ADVANCE

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READ ACTS 11:19-30; 13:1-3

## DEVOTIONAL

Acts 11:19-30 reveals a significant development in the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles, and tells how the church at Antioch came into existence. The beginning of the church at Antioch marks the expansion of disciple-making to unreached people groups and the obedience to Jesus' command to his followers that they be his witnesses in all the world (Acts 1:8). A better understanding of where churches come from equips every believer to pray for our church planters by knowing more of what they are experiencing, and it challenges each of us to consider being a part of a church plant. Whether we stay in Fayetteville or move elsewhere, Jesus calls us to spread the gospel and to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28).

## QUESTIONS



1. Jesus did the complex work on the cross, and the Holy Spirit does the complex work in people's hearts. How can we be a part of the simple, although not easy, work of growing the church through evangelism and discipleship?



2. What are practical ways we can cross the cultural gap to reach unreached people groups in Fayetteville and the surrounding areas (Raeford, Sanford, Southern Pines, Spring Lake, etc.)? Are you currently praying for these communities, especially if you live there?



3. In what ways was the process of planting churches among unreached people groups a difficult but simple process? How can we apply those simple truths of church planting to the growth of the church today?



4. Pray individually or as a group for clarity, wisdom, and discernment as the Spirit leads you, your family, and your community group to consider being a part of church planting both locally and globally.



# ADVANCE

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## READ ACTS 12:1-25

### DEVOTIONAL

One truth we learn from Acts 12 is that God is always governing our trials, even death, through his wisdom. He never looks away. In verses 1-5, we see James and Peter making sacrifices for the sake of the gospel, causing us to look at ourselves as we remember that the Christian life should not be easy. There are no pain-free zones in disciple-making. We find encouragement in God's sovereignty so as to not grow weary in the places to which God has called us. We cling to the armor of God (Ephesians 6) and remember that we are part of a mission to wage war for souls. Jesus' church is worth it.

### QUESTIONS



1. God's kingdom still advances in the midst of hardship and persecution. Jesus is never not on the throne. As you read about or personally experience today's persecuted church, what similarities do you see between persecution today and the bleak opening of Acts 12? Are there moments in your own life causing you to question God's actions?



2. How did God govern Peter's imprisonment through his wisdom?



3. Why does the spread of the gospel always require sacrifice? What example did Jesus set for us?



4. God saved Peter's life for the continuation of His mission. How does the realization that you were freed for a reason, God's mission, impact the way you see your life? Change your values? Change your actions?



# NOTES

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