



ADVANCE
A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

PART 1

FOUNDATIONS FOR MISSION

WE EXIST FOR THE FAME OF JESUS

Our Mission is to make disciples who:

Love God.

Love People.

Advance the Gospel.

Our Vision is to be a church:

For the City.

For the Military.

For the Fame of Jesus.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 26 - BAPTISM SUNDAY

SUNDAY - 9a & 11a - FREEDOM CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

MARCH 1 - NIGHT OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP

WEDNESDAY - 6:30p-8p - FREEDOM CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

MARCH 26 - VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT

SUNDAY - 4p-6p - LOCATION TBD

APRIL - MONTH OF REST

NO EVENTS

APRIL 16 - EASTER SUNDAY - BAPTISMS

SUNDAY - 9a & 11a - FREEDOM CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

MAY 3 - NIGHT OF PRAYER AND WORSHIP

WEDNESDAY - 6:30p-8p - FREEDOM CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

For more information and to RSVP visit:
www.veritasfayetteville.com/events

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** - People, places, events, etc. God is in complete control 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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WEEK 1

READ ACTS 1

DEVOTIONAL

Imagine yourself waiting. Waiting on something so magnificent, but you have no idea the actual power. You are anxious, maybe even fearful. As followers of Jesus we are told to pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17), but can you imagine the prayers that were poured out in that upper room with Peter and the others that night? The teachings of Jesus while he walked the Earth were only the beginning. Little did the ones gathered there that night know that the world as they knew it would change forever.

QUESTIONS



1. Christ instructed his followers to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the promised Holy Spirit (v. 4). What impact does waiting have on promises? What is the benefit of waiting with others?



2. Verses 13-14 go to great lengths to list out all who were there in the Upper Room. What are the implications of sharing and praying together as a group?



3. Read verse 26. How does the coming of the Spirit affect the way we now, in contrast to Old Testament methods, seek guidance?



4. Over this series, what actions will you consider as an individual to help your group multiply?

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WEEK 2

READ ACTS 2:1-21

DEVOTIONAL

Jesus fulfilled his promise. The promised Holy Spirit descended upon his people to empower them for the mission that he had sent them on, the advancement the gospel. When you think of the advancement of the gospel what do you think of? When the Holy Spirit comes upon the followers of Jesus the results are clear: followers of Jesus proclaim the mighty works of God (even in other languages as the Spirit enabled them), all the people in that area gathered together, and Peter begins to authoritatively preach from God's word (Joel 2:28-32). God chooses to put his power on display using the most unlikely of people not with the grandeur of their talent but with the sincerity of their faith in the God who saves.

QUESTIONS



1. God chooses to advance the gospel through his followers, what does that tell about his nature?



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



3. Who do you see participating in this "church gathering?" What does it mean for how we should approach our regular Sunday gathering?



4. Read verse 21 again. Why is this such good news to those who are not followers of Jesus?

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WEEK 3

READ ACTS 2:22-41

DEVOTIONAL

"To remain silent and let others interpret our actions is wrong... we must speak even when we do not know much about the Bible. We must speak even when it is inconvenient. God is bigger than our sins, our ignorance, our pride. He will honor his word in our mouths." - Will Metzger.

Speaking is what Peter did. There was nothing eloquent at all about what he said. As a matter of fact, from what we can read, the majority of his sermon was scripture (Joel and Psalm). That should overwhelm us with relief and joy that it is not our job to save, but our duty to proclaim!

QUESTIONS



1. Peter's witness was mainly made up of citations from Scripture. Why? What does Paul say about the importance of scriptural proofs in giving witness, specifically the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-19)?



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



3. In what ways are we so distracted by life that only grand displays of power capture our attention? Have we missed the Spirit's moving by our inattention?



4. Read verses 36-41 again. What would our community groups and church look like if we acted like the eternal state of every person in the world mattered more than our personal comforts?

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WEEK 4

READ ACTS 2:41-47

DEVOTIONAL

Here we find an unusual statement at the beginning and the end of this particular text. Luke is clearly concerned about the growth of the church in numerical value. Today it seems that sometimes the church is a little too concerned about these numbers, and yes, sometimes that is true. However, Jesus wants to grow his church. He gave us as his followers a clear command in Matthew 28, and as a result of when we obey that command, the church grows. Moreover, as we see in this particular part of Acts, it not only grows, it explodes.

QUESTIONS



1. Why so often today do we think that we need to “add to” the truths of the gospel?



2. What can you do to better know scripture with the intent on sharing it with others?



3. Read verse 46. In your opinion, how has the western culture changed the way we do community? Is there anywhere in the Bible where we see an example of “lone ranger” Christians?



4. God “added to their number day by day” because of the sharing exhibited by the group. How can we love others in a way that God would send disciples our way? In what ways can our groups be more open to receiving those whom God sends? Is there a desire among us to see movements of multiplication?

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WEEK 5

READ ACTS 3

DEVOTIONAL

Just as Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God, called for the repentance of sins, and performed miracles, Peter and John now are doing the same in his name. Peter says it well in Acts 3:16, “And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.” If we are honest, we probably think that this is too good to be true. Was a man healed by faith in Jesus name alone? This is the power of God on display, that we who ask in faith in agreement with his will are healed.

QUESTIONS



1. We know that God would be justified to delay healing in our bodies until heaven. What does it say about his character that he chooses to heal? Do you believe that he continues to heal our bodies today?



2. Read verses 8-10 again. What was the beggars response to being healed? What is the people's response? What is the ultimate point of God healing our bodies?



3. How does God choose to heal in this particular scenario? What does Peter do in response to the healing of this man? What does he focus his address to the people on in verses 12-26?



4. How do we communicate these particular truths about God to the world we live in? How can we pray to be more like Peter? The previously lame beggar?

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WEEK 6

READ ACTS 4:1-31

DEVOTIONAL

As the gospel continues to advance, the chief priests and scribes that orchestrated the murder of Jesus start to openly oppose the apostles. In Luke 20:2, Jesus was approached by these very same scribes and chief priests to be asked, "By what authority do you do these things..." Peter and John find themselves in almost the very same scenario. How did they end up in this predicament? By doing the same things that Jesus was doing: preaching, teaching, and healing? The religious elite wouldn't mind these things being done if they didn't claim the name of Jesus. The same is true today, if we are followers of Christ, we can expect to meet opposition like Peter and John, but only if we are boldly proclaiming the name of Jesus. "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." - Acts 4:12

QUESTIONS



1. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them..." What does being filled with the Holy Spirit mean? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our daily Christian lives?



2. Read verses 18-20 again. Do you feel this way about proclaiming the good news of Jesus to others? Why or why not?



3. Verse 23 says, "When they were released, they went to their friends..." What does friendship have to do with Christian community? Read verses 24-30. Why is prayer within your Community Group so important?



4. When was the last time you prayed to speak the "word with all boldness"? For healing? For miracles to happen for the advancement of the gospel?

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WEEK 7

READ 4:32-37

DEVOTIONAL

“There was not a needy person among them...” (Acts 4:34). Can we even imagine that today? Our people, our brothers, our sisters, not needing anything (not only referring to money) and all for the advancement of the gospel. Generosity was a distinct mark of the early church. Not all of us will be called to sell everything, though some will, but all of us are called to lay our lives at the feet of Jesus for the glory of God.

QUESTIONS



1. How can we, as a Community Group and as individuals, have more courage and boldness in being used by God? What areas are we doubting?



2. Do we have appropriate expectations for God's continued work? What do you think would happen if we truly gave all we had for the advancement of the gospel?



3. How can we identify the things on earth that have taken our eyes off the things of God and put them away, limit their use, or make godly use of their function?



4. How can we, as groups and individuals, have more courage and boldness in being used by God?

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WEEK 8

READ ACTS 5

DEVOTIONAL

There will always be attacks on the mission of God and the church. Some from inside (Satan deceiving Ananias and Saphira) and some from outside (the arrest of the apostles). We can rest assured that God will use this suffering for the sake of his name (v. 41-42). What we can see from the history of the church is that suffering has always sparked gospel advancement. If we, like the early church, pray for boldness, we can expect to meet suffering like those who have gone before us.

QUESTIONS



1. What does it mean that God will use our suffering for the sake of his name? Why is this a good thing for us?



2. Have you ever gone through suffering that produced more faith in Jesus in you? How does suffering expose our strengths and weaknesses? How do you respond to tragedy?



3. What are the dangers of withdrawing from community in the midst of suffering? What is the role of the church (elders, deacons, members) in the midst of suffering?



4. Where specifically do you need boldness to proclaim the name of Jesus? How could your group help each other grow in this?

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WEEK 9

READ ACTS 6:1-7

DEVOTIONAL

It does not take long for things to break down within an organization if you do not have the proper systems and structure in place. In the first verses of Acts 6, we see the need for better systems which include the development of new leaders to serve the church. Some people were not being cared for (Greek-speaking Jewish widows). It was not that the apostles were above certain kinds of work, they simply needed help so that they could continue preaching the gospel.

QUESTIONS



1. Read verse 7 again. What kind of impact do you think it had on the people in this area when the “priests became obedient to the faith?”



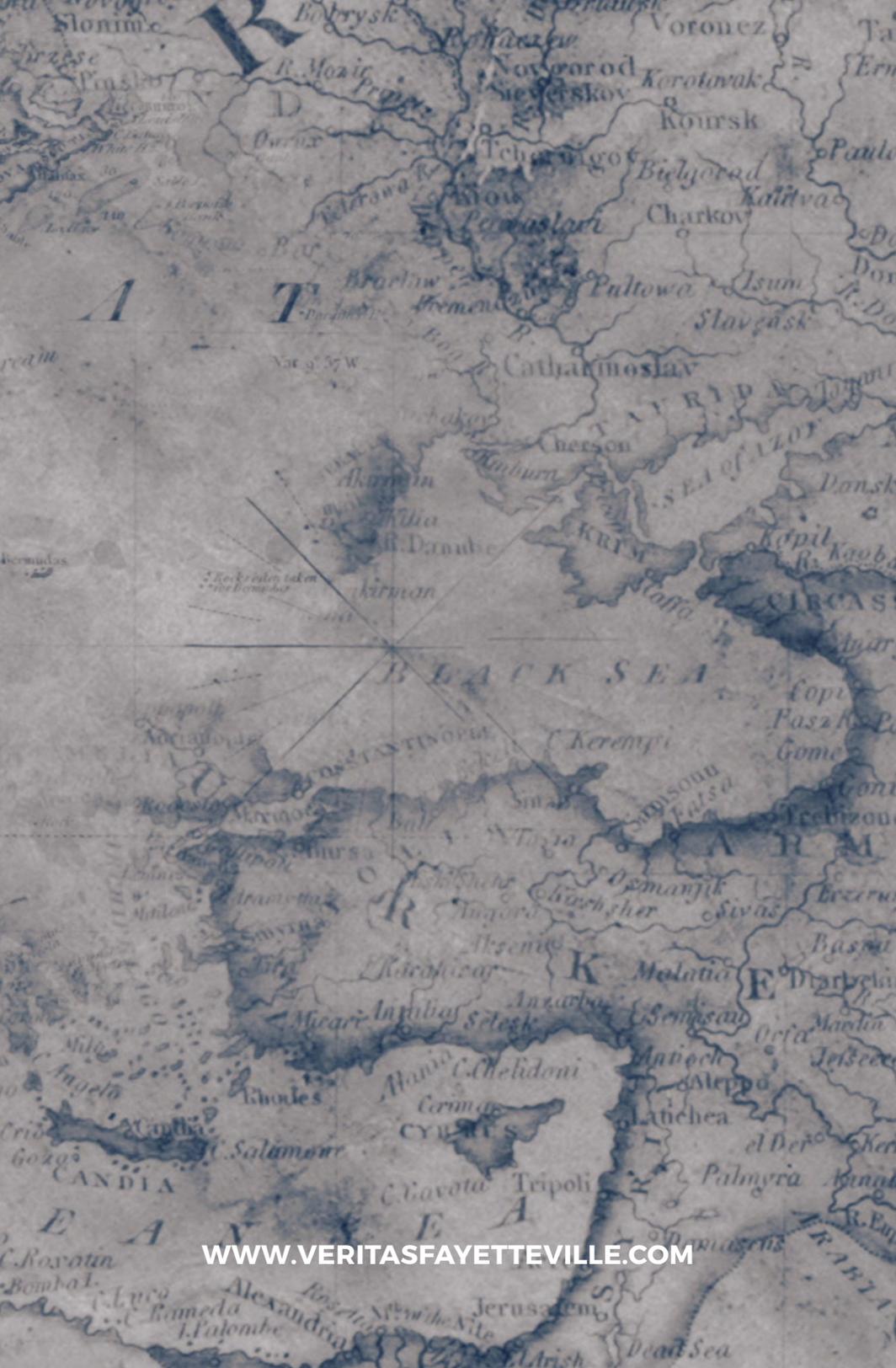
2. What feelings come to mind when you realize that over and over God uses ordinary people to do his work? Does this change the way you pray, sing, or encourage?



3. Read Acts 6:1-7 again. Are you surprised a division arose within the church? How was it handled? Could the situation have impeded the advance of the gospel if not dealt with?



4. Have you spent sufficient time in prayer about what it looks like for you to serve and give in a way that may be out of your comfort zone?



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