

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

FOR FAITHFULLY FOLLOWING JESUS THROUGH YOUR WEEK

DINNER TIME DISCUSSION:

Read Psalm 103 around the table. What is your response to all the reasons given that we have for blessing the Lord? Share a reason, or many, you have for blessing the Lord. How do you see a harvest from the blessings shared around the table?

GOSPEL IN EVERYDAY LIFE:

Reach out to someone who has a different approach to ministry or serves in a different area than you do, who is faithfully bringing the light of Jesus and the gospel. Thank them for their passion and commitment to the Lord. Strengthen them with encouragement.

DEVELOPING DISCIPLINES:

As you continue to grow in your understanding of the arc of this story (the book of Acts), what are you learning about God and the way He works? His heart for people? What invitations are you sensing from the Lord? Spend some time with Him in the quiet considering these questions.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITY:

The Thanksgiving Service is/was Tuesday, November 26 @ 6:30 pm. How can you show up with a heart open to serve others (welcoming others, warmly engaging, helping behind the scenes)? What can you do to follow up on a conversation you had at the pie social?

SERIES SUMMARY ACTIVITY:

Story so far - pick a person or theme and trace a timeline through Acts 13 - 16:5. Expand your search outside of this section of Acts to gain a wider perspective. What themes do you see? What conclusions can you draw? Remind yourself what God has been doing.

Dig into resources available (reference Bible, Logos, Blue Letter Bible, etc), and perhaps split into groups to explore the activities of Paul, Barnabas, Silas, John Mark, and Timothy. Or if you love maps, trace the travel described (maps, geography, spread of gospel).



To be a Christ centered community helping people faithfully follow Jesus both locally and globally.

Leader Resource Guide

Date: Nov. 24 & Dec. 1, 2024

Thankful Growth Partners



THANKSGIVING REFLECTIONS FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY

IF YOU ARE MEETING DURING THE WEEK OF THANKSGIVING, spend some time deeply soaking in gratitude. Ask a 3-part gratitude question, in light of Thanksgiving! Answer all 3.

- What is something happy/positive you are thankful for?
- What is something challenging that you are thankful for?
- What is an attribute of God you are thankful for?

If you are meeting the week after Thanksgiving, too, consider giving this question as homework: do you remember from this section of Acts?

Homework: In preparation for next week's discussion which will look at Acts 15:36-16:5 as well as wrap up this Acts part 2 series, reread Acts 13 - 16:5 tracing themes throughout.

Some options to think about: gospel essentials (+ non essentials) and the attitude these essentials allow for, locations the gospel has spread (trace the travel), the characters that have played major roles in this section, and that returning phrase "strengthening the churches".

WEEK OF DECEMBER I:

We have included questions that will summarize the last two sermons (covering Acts 15:36-16:5). These discussion questions and practical applications are intended to serve as a summary opportunity/wrap up as we end this series from Acts 13 - 16:5 for now.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR FOSTERING CHRIST CENTERED COMMUNITY

1. Where have you been in Scripture this week? What is the Holy Spirit illuminating in the text that is causing you to love Jesus and love others more? What is the Holy Spirit illuminating in the text that is encouraging you in the faith?
2. In Acts 15:36-41, God furthered His purpose as a result of the conflict of the two teams (Barnabas + John Mark, Paul + Silas) as they went in two directions to spread the gospel. What happened in this passage? What's the result of the dispute? What do you make of the tension between Luke's (the author's) emphasis on unity of the church and this story? What unity do these two teams maintain?

Without approving of the divisiveness that led to the separation, God is able to use division to move His people in new directions and multiply the impact of the gospel. This division is not about the heart of the mission- the centrality of the gospel-, but about strategy. This division did not stop the spread of the Gospel.

3. In Acts 16:1-5, why did Paul who argued for the liberation of the Gentiles from the requirement of circumcision, circumcise Timothy? When is it helpful to make cultural adaptations to our strategy to further the gospel? What is "gospel essential" (go back to Acts 15:11)? arrive at?

Don't rush this wrestling. Think about the essentials of the gospel that are being laid out throughout this section of Acts. Use your context clues in Acts 16:1-5.

From ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible, "Context and motivation are critical to Paul. He argues strongly against being circumcised if those arguing for circumcision believe that it is necessary in order to please God (Gal 5:1-6); yet if the motivation is to remove barriers to people hearing about the grace of God, Paul will gladly give up any number of cultural practices or preferences (1 Cor. 9:12-23).

Think about the higher principles Paul was following of faith and love. Think about the importance of flexibility in mission and the goal of teaching and building up churches, as well as the goal of nurturing strong disciples. Think about a time when the greater good required you to be flexible with your actions.

4. There's a strong theme of 'strengthening the church' after the gospel has been preached (Acts 14:22; 15:32, 41; 16:5; will come in 18:23). Use some of your Bible tools (your reference Bible, Logos, Blue Letter Bible) to trace how the word "strengthen" is used. Why do you think this was an important part of the story of the early church? Is "strengthening the church in the faith" important now? Why?

5. A major theme in the whole book of Acts is the work of the Holy Spirit in building the church. After you've done some summary work, what have you learned about the Holy Spirit's work in building the church?

Decide as a group what the summary work will look like or see Summary Activity in the Practical Application portion.

Are you seeing the themes of: the centrality of Christ coming to reconcile sinners by grace through faith (as opposed to what divides us; cultural practices or preferences), graciously navigating tricky topics with a tenacity toward keeping the gospel center and undivided. This strengthens the church and causes it to flourish.

6. Read 2 Corinthians 4-13. Sermon passages are Luke 2:8-20 and John 15:1-8.