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Bethel Gospel Tabernacle



C.A.R.E. SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

C.A.R.E. Study Material

THE BOOK OF ACTS

*And daily in the temple, and in every house,
they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*
(Acts 5:42 (KJV))



For more information on the C.A.R.E. Ministry
Please email CARE@bgtintl.com or call the Church office
Christ-Like **A**pproach in **R**eaching **E**veryone

This material is available on the Bethel website at www.bgtfi.us/care

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1. ACTS 1:1-26

You will be my witnesses." Jesus' last words to his followers began a ministry that Christians throughout the centuries have taken on. Although the task of spreading the gospel around the world is daunting, Jesus promises that he will give his followers enough courage and strength to fulfill their mission.

OPEN

1. Who shared the gospel message with you for the first time?

EXPLORE

2. Why did Jesus tell his disciples to wait in Jerusalem? (1:4-5)
3. What special instructions did Jesus give to his followers before he returned to heaven? (1:8)
4. What does the Holy Spirit equip people to do? (1:8)
5. Why did the early church decide to choose another man to take Judas' place? (1:21) •

GET IT

6. How do some Christians rationalize their lack of involvement in evangelism and missions?
7. How does the promise of Christ's return motivate you to get involved in missions?
8. What sacrifices must God's people make to take the gospel to the ends of the earth?
9. What can you do to get personally involved in spreading the gospel into unreached areas of the world?

APPLY

10. How can you depend on the Holy Spirit to help you share the gospel with an unbelieving friend this week?

2. ACTS 2:1-47

On the day of Pentecost, God's Spirit empowered the apostles to preach about Jesus' death and resurrection in different languages. When the people in Jerusalem heard the gospel preached in their native languages, they asked Peter what they should do. Peter told them to repent of their sins and be baptized. Then they would receive God's forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

OPEN

1. How do people usually react when they see something they do not understand?

EXPLORE

2. How was the presence of the Holy Spirit manifested among the disciples? (2:2-11, 43-47)
3. What parts of Joel's prophecy were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost? (2:16-21)
4. How did God show the world that Jesus is both the Messiah and our Lord? (2:22-36)
5. Who does God call to himself? (2:38-39)

GET IT

6. How is Peter's message to the crowds in Jerusalem relevant to us today?
7. In what specific ways does God's Spirit help believers?
8. How can we become more sensitive to the Spirit's leading?
9. What amazing things have you seen God do in your life or in the lives of others?

APPLY

10. What can you do today to show your appreciation for the gift of the Holy Spirit?

3. ACTS 3:1-26

Through Jesus' power, Peter was able to heal a crippled man. When a crowd of curious onlookers gathered to see what had happened, Peter seized the opportunity to preach the gospel. His message was simple: Repent of your sins and obey Jesus as your Savior.

OPEN

1. When, if ever, has a chance meeting or circumstance turned out to be a great opportunity?

EXPLORE

2. How did Peter explain his ability to heal the lame man? (3:6, 12, 16)
3. How did the people who saw and heard about this miracle react? (3:9-11)
4. What accusations did Peter make about certain Jews and their religious leaders? (3:13-15)
5. What did Peter challenge his listeners to do? (3:19)

GET IT

6. What fears do some Christians have about sharing their faith?
7. What personal responsibility do you feel to challenge people to accept Jesus?
8. When has God given you courage or the right words to tell someone about your faith in Jesus?
9. What principles of evangelism can we glean from Peter's example?

APPLY

10. How can you better prepare yourself for the opportunities God gives you to witness?

4. ACTS 4:1-37

The Jewish religious leaders felt their authority was being challenged by Peter and John's message. So they arrested these disciples and demanded that they keep quiet about their beliefs. Peter and John wisely chose to obey God rather than people. The next day, they continued to preach the Good News of salvation.

OPEN

1. What variety of reactions have you observed people have to the preaching of the gospel message?

EXPLORE

2. Why did the priests and religious leaders arrest Peter and John? (4:1-2)
3. What did the Jewish leaders find so amazing about the apostles? (4:5-14)
4. Why did the religious leaders hesitate to speak against Jesus' disciples? (4:14-16)
5. How did Peter and John respond to the threats of the religious leaders? (4:17-21)

GET IT

6. What risks do we take when we try to witness to people about Christ?
7. When, if ever, have you been challenged or threatened because of your beliefs?
8. What steps can you take to better prepare yourself to explain the gospel to unbelievers?
9. When has the testimony of another believer strengthened or encouraged you to boldly witness for Christ?

APPLY

10. Who is one person you can tell about Jesus' offer of salvation this week?

5. ACTS 5:1-16

The disciples had gained the respect of the people; their authority was confirmed by miraculous signs; and hundreds were being added to the church. This was the time that Satan chose to strike. He tempted Ananias and Sapphira to lie. The Holy Spirit recognized the challenge this small deception was to the purity of the church and responded appropriately.

OPEN

1. When have you felt especially vulnerable to temptation?

EXPLORE

2. How did Ananias and Sapphira try to deceive the church? (5:1-2)
3. Who did Peter identify as the source of this wicked plan? (5:3)
4. How did God demonstrate the seriousness of Ananias and Sapphira's sin? (5:5-6, 10)
5. How did this event impact the early church? (5:5-6, 10-11, 13)

GET IT

6. When have you been disappointed by news that a fellow believer has stumbled in his or her faith?
7. Why is it dangerous to ignore or downplay Satan's power?
8. In what areas of your life are you most susceptible to sin?
9. How does it help you to know your own weak spots?

APPLY

10. What steps can you take this week to strengthen your defenses against Satan's attacks?

6. ACTS 5:17-6:7

The apostles were threatened, arrested, and beaten for the preaching of the gospel. Yet they persevered in their ministry, while rejoicing in the opportunity to suffer disgrace for Jesus. What kept the disciples going was the Holy Spirit. The Spirit empowered the apostles to testify and gave them the courage to endure persecution.

OPEN

1. How do you think you would react if someone publicly ridiculed you for your beliefs?

EXPLORE

2. What motivated the Jewish leaders to persecute the apostles? (5:17)
3. What different instructions did the apostles receive from the high priest and an angel of God? (5:20, 28, 40)
4. How did Peter justify his disobedience to the religious leaders? (5:29-32)
5. What attitude did the apostles have toward the hardships they faced? (5:41)

GET IT

6. How does the example of the apostles inspire or challenge you?
7. How can Christians help each other cope with suffering?
8. Why do some believers lack the confidence to tell others about their Christian faith?
9. What kind of opposition have you experienced because of your relationship with Jesus?

APPLY

10. In what situation do you need to stand up for your faith in Jesus, despite the consequences?

7. ACTS 6:8-8:1

Stephen could not keep the Good News of salvation a secret. He spoke of it to anyone who would listen. Some listened intently, while others took offense. Finally he was dragged before the Jewish religious leaders. Even while on trial, he did not shrink from proclaiming the exciting news that Jesus is the promised Messiah. Jesus is alive, interceding before the Father for all who believe in him. It was Stephen's courage to proclaim this truth that finally led to his death as a martyr for his faith in Christ.

OPEN

1. Why do people feel the need to defend themselves when they are falsely accused?

EXPLORE

2. In what ways did God bless Stephen? (6:8, 10, 15, 55-56)
3. Why did some Jewish people oppose Stephen? (6:8-14)
4. How did Stephen defend himself against their accusations? (7:2-53)
5. What price did Stephen pay for preaching the gospel? (7:54-60)

GET IT

6. What does this passage reveal about Stephen's character?
7. In what ways would you like to be more like Stephen?
8. When have you been tempted to hide the truth about your faith in Jesus? Why?
9. How can you demonstrate that you care more about pleasing God than impressing people?

APPLY

10. How can you depend on God to help you speak the truth this week?

8. ACTS 8:2-40

God had a plan to build his church. After Stephen was martyred, persecution intensified for Christians in Jerusalem. Believers began scattering into Judea and Samaria. Although it was difficult for these Christians to leave Jerusalem, their witness in the towns and villages they settled in helped to spread the gospel. God was working through the suffering of these early Christians.

OPEN

1. What good has God brought from a seemingly bad experience in your past?

EXPLORE

2. How did the atmosphere change in Jerusalem after Stephen was killed? (8:2-3)
3. How did God use the wickedness of some people for the good of the church? (8:3-4)
4. What did Philip do after he escaped from Jerusalem? (8:5-7, 12, 26-40)
5. How did the apostles acknowledge and confirm the importance of Philip's new ministry? (8:14-17, 25)

GET IT

6. How is it possible to grow spiritually during painful times in our lives?
7. What are some of the hidden benefits of suffering?
8. How does this passage challenge you to change your attitude toward your present circumstances?
9. What do you think God may be trying to teach you through the problems you currently face?

APPLY

10. How can you show your willingness to learn and be used by God in your present situation?

9. ACTS 9:1-43

God had a plan to build his church. After Stephen was martyred, persecution intensified for Christians in Jerusalem. Believers began scattering into Judea and Samaria. Although it was difficult for these Christians to leave Jerusalem, their witness in the towns and villages they settled in helped to spread the gospel. God was working through the suffering of these early Christians.

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8. How does this passage challenge you to change your attitude toward your present circumstances?
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APPLY

10. How can you show your willingness to learn and be used by God in your present situation?

10. ACTS 10:1-48

God worked in miraculous ways to bring Peter and Cornelius together. Through angels and visions, God made the impossible occur: He brought a Jewish Christian and a Roman officer together. He united the two together in the church of Christ with the special gift of the Holy Spirit. This experience was a clear sign to the early church that God accepts anyone who believes and obeys in his Son, Jesus Christ. All can receive the gift of salvation.

OPEN

1. What have you learned to appreciate about people from other cultures and races?

EXPLORE

2. Why did God choose to reveal himself to Cornelius? (10:1-4)
3. How did God prepare Peter to accept the invitation to visit Cornelius? (10:9-21)
4. What were Peter's main points in his summation of the gospel? (10:34-43)
5. What did Peter learn from this experience? (10:34-35, 43-48)

GET IT

6. What barriers interfere with the spiritual growth of the church today?
7. What can Christians of different nationalities learn from each other?
8. How can you be more open to what other believers can teach you?
9. What changes do you need to make in how you think about and treat people who are different than you?

APPLY

10. How can you show greater acceptance and love for the different people in your church?

11. ACTS 11:1-30

The believers in Jerusalem thought Peter's association with Gentiles was wrong. They confronted him. He, in turn, explained his actions. After fully hearing him out, they realized that God had authorized Peter's actions and his ministry with his gift of the Holy Spirit. Because everyone was submitting their actions to God's judgment, the conflict was quickly resolved. Instead of arguments and confrontation, the conflict ended in songs of praise.

OPEN

1. What has your past experience taught you about resolving interpersonal conflicts?

EXPLORE

2. What caused the argument between Peter and the Jewish believers in Jerusalem? (11:1-3)
3. How did Peter defend himself and his actions? (11:4-17)
4. What divine intervention was evident in Peter's encounter with Cornelius? (11:5-17)
5. How did the Jewish believers receive Peter's explanation? (11:18)

GET IT

6. What lessons can we learn from the way the early church handled this dispute?
7. What are some sources of disagreement between believers today?
8. When is it better to openly discuss our differences instead of glossing over them?
9. How can you improve your conflict resolution skills?

APPLY

10. What quarrel or problem do you need to take the first step in resolving this week?

12. ACTS 12:1-25

Peter's situation seemed hopeless. Herod had thrown him into a heavily guarded prison and planned to put him on trial. The governor and the Jewish leaders were against him; but Peter had the earnest prayers of God's people on his side. God answered those prayers. He sent an angel to Peter to escort him out of jail.

OPEN

1. Where do you usually turn for help when you find yourself in a predicament?

EXPLORE

2. Why did Herod arrest Peter? (12:1-4)
3. How did the church support Peter during his incarceration? (12:5)
4. How did God answer the prayers of the believers? (12:6-10)
5. What did Peter do after the angel helped him escape from prison? (12:12-18)

GET IT

6. How can the church help people who are facing hardships?
7. Why is it important to tell other believers when God helps us through difficult experiences?
8. When have you felt supported by the prayers of God's people during a trying time in your life?
9. Why do we sometimes fail to pray in the midst of a crisis?

APPLY

10. When can you spend some extended time in prayer for someone who is going through a difficult time?

13. ACTS 13:1-52

Saul and Barnabas had been commissioned by the church at Antioch and the Holy Spirit to become missionaries. The two set out on their first missionary journey. In Cyprus they encountered opposition to their evangelistic efforts. Saul and Barnabas, however, did not allow their lack of success in Cyprus to discourage them. Instead, they persisted in the task God had given them, thanking God for the opportunity to serve him.

OPEN

1. Why do you think "burn-out" is a problem for some pastors and missionaries?

EXPLORE

2. What motivated Barnabas and Saul to embark on this missionary journey? (13:1-4)
3. Who opposed the ministry of the disciples? Why? (13:8, 45, 50)
4. How did Paul and Barnabas respond to those who opposed them? (13:9-12, 46, 51-52)
5. What attitude did Paul and Barnabas have toward the task God had given them? (13:46-47, 51-52)

GET IT

6. What can we learn from the early church about discovering the ministry God wants us to do?
7. How can unrealistic expectations rob us of the joy of serving God?
8. When has your Christian testimony fallen on deaf ears? How did you react?
9. What happens when we depend on our own abilities and plans instead of trusting in God's Spirit to do the real work?

APPLY

10. How can you determine whether your motives and goals in ministry are pleasing to God?

14. ACTS 14:1-28

God transformed Saul, a zealous persecutor of the church, into Paul, a dynamic, dedicated missionary. Paul was ridiculed, threatened, stoned, and left for dead; yet none of these hardships kept him from fulfilling the mission God had given him. He courageously preached the Good News all over the Mediterranean world.

OPEN

1. Who is the most courageous Christian you know?

EXPLORE

2. What different reactions to the gospel did Paul and Barnabas encounter? (14:1-2, 4-5, 11-13, 18-20)
3. How did Paul suffer for the sake of the gospel? (14:5-6, 19)
4. How did Paul prove his commitment to Christ? (14:3, 7, 9-10, 14-15, 19-27)
5. What help did Paul and Barnabas receive in their ministry? (14:3, 20, 27-28)

GET IT

6. What changes has God made in your life since you became a Christian?
7. How have other believers helped you grow in your faith?
8. What can stand in the way of our wholehearted obedience to God?
9. In what areas of your life are you holding something back from God? Why?

APPLY

10. What can you do this week to demonstrate your wholehearted commitment to follow and obey Jesus?

15. ACTS 15:1-35

Is adherence to Old Testament law required for salvation? Paul and Barnabas went to meet with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem to discuss this important question. Following a long discussion, the council decided that Gentiles did not have to be circumcised or observe other Jewish traditions to be saved. Jesus' teaching and the Holy Spirit's testimony agreed. Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

OPEN

1. According to your past experience, what is the best way to resolve a dispute?

EXPLORE

2. Who argued that non-Jewish believers had to be circumcised to be saved? (15:1, 5)
3. According to Peter, how was the church testing God? (15:7-11)
4. How did the words of the prophets help the council take a stand on this issue? (15:15-18)
5. How did the council communicate their decision to non-Jewish believers? (15:22-31)

GET IT

6. What requirements and traditions have people tried to add to the gospel?
7. Why is it important to maintain the simplicity of the gospel?
8. How would you explain to a new believer what God expects of him or her?
9. When you first became a Christian, what pressure did you feel to conform to certain church traditions?

APPLY

10. How can you guard against adding rules or traditions to the simple gospel message that all who repent and believe in Jesus will be saved?

16. ACTS 15:36-16:40

A wealthy female merchant, a demon-possessed servant girl, and a Roman jailer—these were just a few of the people Paul reached with the gospel. On his second missionary journey, Paul was called to preach the gospel in Macedonia, in present-day Greece. Paul not only crossed the Aegean Sea to share the gospel with others; he was not afraid to cross the social, ethnic, and religious barriers of his day in order to tell others the Good News that Jesus can save people from their sins.

OPEN

1. When, if ever, have you experienced prejudice?

EXPLORE

2. Who did Paul choose to join him in his missionary travels? Why? (16:1-3)
3. With whom did Paul share the gospel in Philippi? (16:13-15)
4. What resulted from Paul's outreach to the demon-possessed slave girl? (16:16-24)
5. How did Paul develop a relationship with the jailer? (16:25-34)

GET IT

6. What types of people does the church tend to neglect or ignore?
7. How can we build relationships with those people who are usually forgotten by the church?
8. Why is it difficult to cross social and cultural boundaries with the gospel?
9. What fears, prejudices, or barriers are interfering with your witness for Christ?

APPLY

10. When can you set time aside to ask God to reveal to you what prejudices you might have that are hindering your witness to others?

17. ACTS 17:1-34

The gospel caused quite a stir in Athens. Several philosophers invited Paul to explain this "new idea" at one of their meetings. Paul was prepared for this opportunity—he presented the gospel in a convincing and articulate way. Like the apostle Paul, we should be prepared to explain salvation to anyone who is interested.

OPEN

1. What is the most difficult theological question someone has asked you?

EXPLORE

2. How did Paul familiarize himself with the culture in Athens? (17:16-19, 23)
3. What common ground did Paul establish with his audience? (17:23-24)
4. How did Paul challenge the beliefs of his listeners? (17:23-31)
5. How did the people respond to Paul's presentation of the gospel? (17:32-34)

GET IT

6. What principles of evangelism can we learn from Paul's example?
7. What prevents some Christians from telling others about their beliefs?
8. In what ways do you feel inadequate to present the gospel?
9. How has God worked through you in the past, despite your fears and weaknesses?

APPLY

10. When can you spend some extra time in Bible study this week to better prepare yourself to answer people's questions about God?

18. ACTS 18:1-28

God cared for the apostle Paul in practical ways. He encouraged Paul in his ministry with a vision. He gave Paul good friends, such as Aquila and Priscilla, to encourage him in the faith. God even provided a way for Paul to support himself through tentmaking. Even though Paul had to face many obstacles and severe opposition to his preaching, God always provided enough resources so that Paul could serve him.

OPEN

1. When has an unexpected surprise brightened your day?

EXPLORE

2. How did Aquila and Priscilla help the apostle Paul? (17:2-3, 18)
3. How did the arrival of Silas and Timothy impact Paul's ministry? (17:5)
4. What words of encouragement did God give to Paul in a vision? (17:9-10)
5. Why did Gallio throw Paul's accusers out of his court? (17:12-16)

GET IT

6. When have the demands of ministry left you feeling drained?
7. How did God minister to you during that time?
8. How can friends within the church protect and support us?
9. In what circumstances do you tend to doubt God's love and concern for you?

APPLY

10. How can you trust God to meet your needs today?

19. ACTS 19:1-41

Paul encountered some people who had repented of their sins but did not understand why they had to believe in Jesus. Paul explained the significance of Christ's ministry and the importance of Christ's death for their sins. They readily accepted the Good News and were baptized in the name of Jesus.

OPEN

1. When have you felt confused or lost?

EXPLORE

2. What key question did Paul ask the followers he found on his way to Ephesus? (19:1-2)
3. What was the extent of these people's beliefs? (19:2-4)
4. Why did Paul encourage these followers to be baptized a second time? (19:4-5)
5. How did God confirm the faith of these new believers? (19:5-7)

GET IT

6. What are some misconceptions people have about how to establish a right relationship with God?
7. How would you summarize the gospel in one sentence?
8. What are some outward signs of true belief in Jesus?
9. Which of your friends or family members do not fully grasp God's plan of salvation?

APPLY

10. Who is one person you can explain the gospel of Jesus Christ to? How?

20. ACTS 20:1-21:16

Paul received several warnings about the dangers that awaited him in Jerusalem. His Christian friends begged him not to go. But Paul insisted on completing the mission God had given him. He was willing to suffer, and even die, for Jesus. His single-minded commitment to God's mission for his life was a testimony to others.

OPEN

I. What poor advice have you received from well-meaning friends?

EXPLORE

2. What warning did the Christians in Tyre give to Paul? (21:4)
3. Why did the prophet Agabus tie his own hands and feet? (21:10-11)
4. How did Paul's friends react to Agabus's prediction? (21:12)
5. What was Paul's attitude toward danger and persecution? (20:22-24; 21:13-14)

GET IT

6. How can our desire to please others get in the way of doing God's work?
7. What mission or ministry has God given you?
8. What do you think you would do if your friends advised you to put a ministry on hold for a year or two?
9. Why is it important to carefully weigh the advice of others, even Christian leaders?

APPLY

10. What steps can you take this week to eliminate whatever is hindering your obedience to God?

21. ACTS 21:17-22:29

False rumors about Paul's ministry among the Gentiles had quickly spread through Jerusalem. The Jews arrested him and accused him of turning people against their laws and traditions. Paul defended himself, not for selfish reasons, but to gain a chance to preach the gospel. He saw even the most frightful situation as an opportunity for God to work through him.

OPEN

1. Why do most people feel a strong need to defend themselves?

EXPLORE

2. What did Paul do to avoid offending anyone in the church? (21:20-26)
3. Why did the people in Jerusalem want to kill Paul? (21:27-30)
4. How did Paul show Christ's love to his accusers? (21:38-22:21)
5. What was the central theme of Paul's defense? (22:3-21)

GET IT

6. In the face of persecution and possible death, what was Paul's primary concern?
7. If you had been in Paul's shoes, how do you think your defense speech would have been different than his?
8. How can we determine when defending ourselves is the right thing to do?
9. Which of the character traits displayed by Paul would you like to cultivate in your own life?
How?

APPLY

10. How can you prepare yourself to defend your faith, even when others falsely accuse

22. ACTS 22:30-23:35

Paul was in the protective custody of the Romans when he learned of the Jewish conspiracy to kill him. Forty Jews had sworn not to drink or eat until they had killed Paul. But Paul knew their plan would fail. God had assured him the night before that he would continue his ministry in Rome.

OPEN

1. When has a friend saved you from a sticky situation?

EXPLORE

2. How did God show his personal concern for Paul during this trying time? (23:11)
3. What encouragement could Paul gain from God's instructions? (23:11-13)
4. Who was involved in the plan to kill Paul? (23:12-15)
5. How did God protect Paul from the Jews' murderous plot? (23:16-24)

GET IT

6. How is God's perfect timing evident in this story?
7. When has God prepared you in advance for a trial or difficult experience?
8. When is it tempting to doubt God's promises?
9. What problem in your life do you feel helpless to solve on your own?

APPLY

10. How can you demonstrate this week your belief that God is in control of your situation?

23. ACTS 24:1-27

The Jews persisted in their plan to get rid of Paul. They presented their case against him before Felix. The governor, in turn, gave Paul the freedom to explain himself. Paul once again seized the opportunity to present God's plan of salvation to everyone who was listening. Felix showed some interest in the gospel, until he learned of the cost involved in following Jesus. Felix did not want to sacrifice his own life of pleasure and power to follow Jesus.

OPEN

1. When, if ever, has some pleasurable activity distracted you from what you should have been doing at that time?

EXPLORE

2. What specific accusations did the lawyer make against Paul in court? (24:2-8)
3. How did Paul refute each of the Jews' charges? (24:10-21)
4. Why did Felix imprison Paul for two years? (24:22-24, 26)
5. At what point did Felix reject Paul's message? (24:25)

GET IT

6. In what ways is being a Christian difficult?
7. Why is it important to tell others about the benefits and costs involved in following Jesus?
8. What personal sacrifices have you made because of your commitment to Christ?
9. Which of God's commands have you struggled to obey?

APPLY

10. In what area do you need to work on applying your beliefs to your daily life?

24. ACTS 25:1-22

"I have done nothing wrong." Paul's clear conscience gave him the courage to ask for a hearing in Rome. He knew this would give him another opportunity to preach the gospel. Paul's scrupulous obedience to the laws of the land lent credibility to his message.

OPEN

1. Why do you think the saying, "Do what I say, not what I do," is popular?

EXPLORE

2. How did Paul respond to the serious charges brought against him? (25:8)
3. What opportunity did Festus offer to Paul? (25:9)
4. Why did Paul refuse the governor's offer? (25:3, 10-11)
5. What appeal did Paul make to Festus? (25:10-11)

GET IT

6. Why was Paul able to claim his rights as a Roman citizen?
7. If Paul had been guilty of breaking some of the Jewish or Roman laws, how do you think people would have responded to his message?
8. How is the gospel affected when believers live blamelessly?
9. What steps can we take to gain credibility with people who need to hear the Good News?

APPLY

10. How can you deal with any sins in your life that may be inhibiting your Christian testimony?

25. ACTS 25:23-26:32

Paul's message remained the same, even when his audience included the king and queen. He humbly explained how Jesus had completely changed his life and challenged his listeners to accept God's gift of salvation. Even when his message was met with astonishment and a curt dismissal, Paul did not back down from his beliefs. Instead he politely told his listeners that he would be praying for every one of them.

OPEN

1. When have you had great news that you could not wait to share with your friends?

EXPLORE

2. Why did Festus arrange another hearing for Paul? (25:23-27)
3. How did Paul try to persuade King Agrippa to accept Jesus as Savior? (26:2-23)
4. What insulting and sarcastic remarks did people make to Paul? (26:24, 28)
5. How did Paul respond to the king's and governor's demeaning remarks? (26:25-26, 29)

GET IT

6. What can we learn from Paul's strategies and methods in spreading the gospel?
7. Why do you think some Christians feel intimidated by the thought of witnessing?
8. Do you think personal stories or theological arguments are more effective in witnessing?
Why?
9. How can we avoid a condescending or judgmental attitude in sharing our faith with others?

APPLY

10. Who is one person you can tell about what Jesus has done for you?

26. ACTS 27:1-44

Most people would have despaired in Paul's situation. He was a prisoner, aboard a ship that was stuck in a violent storm. Everyone else had given up all hope of survival; Paul, however, remained calm. Through a vision, God had promised to save him and all the crew from the storm. Paul's calm trust in God's promises in the midst of the storm that raged all around inspired others on the ship to place their hope in God.

OPEN

1. Why do most people enjoy hearing stories of courage and heroism?

EXPLORE

2. What impact did Paul make on his Roman guard? (27:1, 3, 42-43)
3. How was Paul's demeanor different from the other's aboard the ship? (27:21-26, 33-35)
4. What caused Paul's shipmates to trust him? (27:10-21, 31, 33-38, 43)
5. How did God fulfill his promise to Paul? (27:23-24, 44)

GET IT

6. When has God given you a promise to cling to in the midst of a frightening experience?
7. How do you usually react when you face a crisis or an overwhelming problem?
8. What steps can we take during the good times of life to better prepare ourselves to face the bad times?
9. In what practical ways can we demonstrate our faith in God's sovereign control?

APPLY

10. For what difficulty in your life do you need to turn to God for courage and strength?

27. ACTS 28:1-31

Paul's life was far from easy—he was arrested, shipwrecked, imprisoned, insulted, and rejected by many. During these countless trials, Paul's courage and perseverance was remarkable. Even more spectacular, however, was God's presence and power in his life. God is the same today: He continues to reveal himself to those who obey him, no matter what it costs.

OPEN

1. When have you been impressed by a friend's courage?

EXPLORE

2. How was God's power evident in Paul's life? (28:3-6, 8-9)
3. Who encouraged Paul when he finally arrived in Rome? (28:15)
4. How did Paul explain his situation to the Jewish leaders in Rome? (28:17-20)
5. How did God work through Paul while he was under house arrest? (28:20-31)

GET IT

6. When has God revealed himself to you in an unusual or unexpected way?
7. How can we experience more of God's power in our lives?
8. Why is it important to acknowledge God as the source of believers' power?
9. How do trials and troubles sensitize us to God's presence?

APPLY

10. How can you thank God today for his presence and power in your life?