

A topographic map with brown and tan contour lines and dashed lines representing paths or roads. The map is oriented vertically.

HOSTED BY NEW HOPE O'AHU

THE *ACTS*  
OF THE *APOSTLES*

STUDY GUIDE

# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES – SESSION INTRODUCTION –

Welcome to this 8-week study in the Book of Acts taught by Passion City Church pastor Louie Giglio! Our prayer is that you will discover God's blueprint for being the church He intended us to be. We believe that God is going to do a mighty and powerful work in the hearts and minds of our church 'ohana to:

- Seek and set our minds on things above,
- Lay up our treasures in heaven,
- Act on the Great Commission - to people saved, baptized, and discipled,
- Serve the Lord and encourage one another until the Lord returns, for these are the Last Days.

Thank you for joining us!

## – SMALL GROUP FORMAT –

### **SESSION GOAL / *what should I get out of this session?***

This section will highlight the main idea of the teaching. Read it over and keep the main idea in mind as you view the video lesson.

### **READ / *study the main reading.***

Each week, there will be passages of Scripture that are the foundation of the session. Read these brief passages before your small group gathering.

### **DISCUSSION / *dive into questions with your group!***

Each session will include up to eight discussion questions to answer, including one fun icebreaker. Begin going over these questions after you have viewed the video lesson. Answer as honestly as possible and if you are not able to answer every question during the small group meeting, that's okay! Take some time during the week to reflect or journal on the rest.

### **THE BOTTOM LINE / *what is my main takeaway?***

This section will boil down the lesson into one practical application to reflect on throughout the week.

**NOTE:** Don't forget to open your small group with prayer and to close out with prayer requests!

# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - SESSION 1 - PURPOSE & POWER

## **SESSION GOAL / *what should I get out of this session?***

### **Main Idea**

Jesus calls us to build His church to the ends of the earth through bold evangelism and by making disciples of all people.

## **READ / *study the main reading.***

Acts 1:1–11

## **DISCUSSION / *dive into questions with your group!***

### **Icebreaker: If you could choose, would you rather be able to teleport or read minds?**

Jesus commanded His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were baptized by the Holy Spirit. His command gave them a place, a purpose, and a promise, but they had to wait a few days to receive that promise.

- **What makes waiting on a promise different than waiting on an uncertain hope?**
- **What are you hoping Jesus will do in your life? In your city?**

Louie quoted from Matthew 28:18–19, “Jesus came near and said to them, ‘All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations . . .’” to help us see that Jesus not only has authority over sin and death but authority over everything.

- **In what ways are you submitting to Jesus, the authority of heaven and earth, in your life?**
- **Are there any areas of your life you don’t see Him as the authority?**

Jesus, the great author and authority, has given us a singular and clear purpose: to be His witnesses. Part of being a witness is testifying to power and work God has done in your own life.

- **What have you seen Jesus do in your life?**
- **In what ways has He changed your life?**

The Book of Acts shows us how the church began in Jerusalem, spread through Judea and Samaria, and grew throughout the known world. We are still caught up in the story of the church today as the gospel continues to reach new people.

- **In what ways is God writing his story in your home, neighborhood, workplace, and church?**

## **THE BOTTOM LINE / *what is my main takeaway?***

Even when God calls us to patiently wait where we are, He is still writing His story for all of us.

# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - SESSION 2 - STRIKE THE MATCH

## **SESSION GOAL / *what should I get out of this session?***

### **Main Idea**

Christians are a part of the same church that began on the day of Pentecost, called to spread the story of Jesus around the world.

## **READ / *study the main reading.***

Acts 2:1–13, 37–47; 5:33–42.

## **DISCUSSION / *dive into questions with your group!***

**Icebreaker: What is one of the scariest things you've done? Looking back, would you do it again?**

One of the ways we can be equipped to share the gospel is to recognize the gospel working within ourselves. The transformation that God has done in your life is YOUR story to share and tell others about who He is and how He has changed YOU.

- **What events in your life have confirmed the truth of the gospel?**
- **In what ways is the Holy Spirit empowering you to share the gospel today?**

The same Spirit that empowered the disciples resides in every Christian. He empowers us to leap into the mission of God and spread the gospel to those who don't know Jesus. Some people may believe us and accept Jesus. Others may reject us out of hand. Regardless of the result of our evangelism, we have the opportunity to try.

- **What keeps you from sharing the gospel?**
- **Are there any boundaries that challenge the spread of the gospel where you live?**

Read Acts 2:42–47.

- **What qualities marked the early church?**
- **In what ways is God calling you to be obedient to His call and His mission to seek and save the lost?**

## **THE BOTTOM LINE / *what is my main takeaway?***

To live boldly as evangelists, enduring opposition and looking for opportunities to reach out to people who do not know Jesus.

# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - SESSION 3 - SERVE & SCATTER

## **SESSION GOAL / *what should I get out of this session?***

### **Main Idea**

Fear can silence Christians, but God calls us to boldly proclaim the gospel in every circumstance, no matter the outcome.

## **READ / *study the main reading.***

Acts 6:1–15; 7:51–8:1.

## **DISCUSSION / *dive into questions with your group!***

**Icebreaker: Do you currently serve in a ministry? Share which one. If you don't currently serve, share which ministry you could see yourself in.**

The road to this point in the book of Acts has not been easy. As Louie said in the video, the incline of the early church's path was steep, and things did not improve in Acts 6–7. But these chapters give us a picture of service and a model of faith we should aspire to. Let's start our discussion by thinking through the spiritual high points in our lives.

- **When do you most enjoy following Jesus?**
- **When do you feel God's presence the most?**

The men chosen to serve were the rock stars of the early church, yet they were asked to do a mundane job. But, as Louie taught in the video, even mundane jobs can change the world.

- **What are the practical, mundane needs in your church that you could meet?**

It is rare to see someone act like Stephen did when people opposed him.

- **What is a common way people respond to opposition in our society?**
- **In what ways do you respond when someone contradicts or questions you?**

Despite his grace and wisdom, Stephen did not persuade everyone. He didn't even make friends with everyone. Some people still rejected the gospel and stirred up false rumors and lies about Stephen.

- **What encouragement or discouragement does it give you knowing that even at your most Christlike, not everyone will like or agree with you?**
- **What is Stephen's legacy?**

## **THE BOTTOM LINE / *what is my main takeaway?***

To serve the church and spread the gospel, regardless of the results of those actions.

# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - SESSION 4 - BREAKTHROUGH MIRACLE POWER

## **SESSION GOAL / *what should I get out of this session?***

### **Main Idea**

The gospel is for all people, which means we should eagerly share the good news of Jesus Christ with everyone.

## **READ / *study the main reading.***

Acts 8:1–8, 14–17, 26–31; 9:10–20; 10:25–35, 44–48.

## **DISCUSSION / *dive into questions with your group!***

**Icebreaker: Some of our favorite surprises come out of the most unexpected circumstances. What is one of the best surprises you ever had?**

God used the tragedy of Stephen's death to reach "unclean" people groups, those whom most Jews would never associate with. In the video, Louie pointed out the one place a faithful Jew would never have wanted to go was Samaria. Samaritans were outsiders, disliked, and looked down on. No one would have wanted to be where Philip was.

- **When has God taken you where you did not want to go?**
- **What was your reaction to that circumstance?**

For the first time in Acts, the gospel is preached specifically to people who were not Jewish, to outsiders looked down on by society.

- **Who are our modern-day outsiders?**

Every Christian should be ready for encounters like the one Philip had with the Ethiopian. If someone asks us about Jesus, we should be both willing and able to proclaim Jesus to them.

- **How would you share the gospel with someone who does not know Jesus?**
- **To practice, share the good news of Jesus with someone in your group.**

As Louie said in the video, there are no boundaries for the gospel. It is for everyone. The Holy Spirit fell upon Gentiles before the church in Jerusalem thought it was possible. It shocked Peter and the men he was with.

- **Is there anyone you have given up on or assume cannot be saved?**
- **In what ways can you eagerly pray for and witness to that person this week?**

## **THE BOTTOM LINE / *what is my main takeaway?***

To freely share the gospel with all people and hope for God to work miracles in the most surprising moments.

# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - SESSION 5 - THE CHURCH IS BUILT THROUGH BLOCKING & TACKLING

## **SESSION GOAL / *what should I get out of this session?***

### **Main Idea**

The most powerful thing we can do to build the church is the ordinary, common work of discipleship and evangelism.

## **READ / *study the main reading.***

Acts 11:19–26; 12:1–7, 13–17; 13:1–3, 14:8–20.

## **DISCUSSION / *dive into questions with your group!***

**Icebreaker: What is one habit that you picked up early on that you're now glad you started (i.e. exercising regularly, saving money, etc) ?**

Our ambitions to make an impact or to be remembered aren't necessarily evil. But we get into trouble when we would rather be remembered for temporary success rather than eternal impact.

- **In what ways could your passions and ambitions be used to build God's church?**

The persecution of the church in Jerusalem had escalated. King Herod, the political leader of the Jews, killed the disciple James and imprisoned Peter. It must have been tough to see God in all the chaos.

- **When life gets difficult, what do you think God is up to?**

Louie pointed out that we often have trouble noticing miracles, even when they present themselves to us like Peter at Mary's house.

- **What prayers have been answered in your life?**
- **What could you do to regularly recognize God's provision for your prayers?**

We often define spiritual success and failure by our results. We sometimes think opposition or struggle is a sign that we are moving in the wrong direction. But God had not called Paul and Barnabas to be universally successful. He had called them to be faithful.

- **In what ways is God calling you to be faithful to Him and His mission?**
- **What could faithfulness to Him look like as you go about your week?**

## **THE BOTTOM LINE / *what is my main takeaway?***

To seek out ways we can be missionaries for Jesus, wherever God has placed us.

# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - SESSION 6 - THE GOD ABOVE IT ALL

## **SESSION GOAL / *what should I get out of this session?***

### **Main Idea**

In hopeless situations, our first response should always be to turn to God in worship.

## **READ / *study the main reading.***

Acts 15:5–29, 36–41; 16:16–33; 17:16–31; 18:24–28.

## **DISCUSSION / *dive into questions with your group!***

### **Icebreaker: What is one of your favorite worship songs?**

In the video, Louie talked about a better way to approach conflict in the church and encouraged us to seek reconciliation and unity as God's people. Read Romans 12:17–21. Often, we do not want peace in an argument. We want to get even or get back at those who hurt us, even if they are our brothers or sisters in Christ.

- **What makes it difficult to let go of getting even and choose to forgive instead?**

Louie talked about how we should respond to the difficult circumstances in our lives that appear to derail us and what we are doing for God's mission. In Philippi, Paul and Silas were unjustly imprisoned, bringing their missionary journey to a screeching halt.

- **What is your typical response to difficult circumstances?**

Paul and Silas's situation was a part of a much larger plan. Ultimately, it was used to introduce the prisoners and guards to Jesus.

- **Why is it so important to worship God even when we are in difficult circumstances?**
- **What opportunities could your current circumstances give you to tell others about Jesus?**

While it may seem like we have nothing in common with some people, we all share the same desire to know God. The Athenians were so desperate to please the gods that they made an altar to an unknown god. Today, people do the same thing, searching for "spirituality" in various ways, seeking meaning, purpose, and identity.

- **In what ways have you seen people searching for spirituality without God?**
- **How can we respond (but not react) to these expressions of spirituality with truth and love?**

## **THE BOTTOM LINE / *what is my main takeaway?***

To trust God in the midst of our difficulties, knowing that he is unchanging when our circumstances are unsure.



# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES - SESSION 7 - THE SUPREME VALUE OF THE MISSION

## **SESSION GOAL / *what should I get out of this session?***

### **Main Idea**

As Christians, it's important that we faithfully pursue God's mission and testify to others the work He has done in and through us.

## **READ / study the main reading.**

Acts 20:17–24; 21:10–14, 26–36; 24:24–27; 26:12–26.

## **DISCUSSION / dive into questions with your group!**

**Icebreaker: What is one thing (hobby, sport, ministry, etc.) that you are passionate about, that if you did it full-time, it would be Christmas every day?**

This session is all about your primary motivation in life, what Louie called your "why." For Paul, his motivation was to carry the name of Jesus to the ends of the earth. That may seem like a broad motivation, but it gave him a specific purpose throughout his ministry.

- **What do you think your "why" is, the specific mission God has given YOU and only you based on your giftings, skills, and life experience?**

Louie's advice to us was to commit to God's plan before we know what life holds for us, to trust God with our future life as we have trusted Him with our eternity.

- **What would it look like to trust God and to stay faithful to your "why" even when your life takes an unexpected turn?**

We should never undervalue our testimonies because they are living, breathing stories of God at work. The foundation of a testimony is simply three statements. **Practice your testimony with someone by finishing these statements:**

1. **Before Jesus, I was...**
2. **Then Jesus...**
3. **Since then...**

- **What does it look like to be faithful to God where you are today?**

## **THE BOTTOM LINE / *what is my main takeaway?***

To obey God's commands in all facets of our lives and to be faithful to what He is doing in and through us.

# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES – SESSION 8 – NOTHING CAN STOP GOD'S PLAN

## **SESSION GOAL / *what should I get out of this session?***

### **Main Idea**

We can trust God with the detours of our lives, knowing that they will serve to accomplish His mission and make us more like Jesus.

## **READ / *study the main reading.***

Acts 27:21–26, 39–44; 28:16–31.

## **DISCUSSION / *dive into questions with your group!***

### **Icebreaker: What is one thing that stood out to you during this study?**

Louie shared the story of his friends, Jay and Katherine Wolf, whose lives took a detour after Katherine suffered a stroke at a young age. But the Wolfs did not view the effects of the stroke on Katherine as a punishment or God failing them, rather they saw it as a God-given platform to fulfill His mission in their own lives.

- **In what ways could the detours in your own life be God's assignment to fulfill His mission through you?**
- **What new opportunities has a detour in your life given you to serve others or introduce someone to Jesus?**

Louie showed us a small detail in Acts that points to a much larger truth. In Acts 27:37, there is a quick note of the exact number of people on this ship. Through this we see that God is concerned with everyone, not just the heavy hitters like Paul.

- **In what ways have you compared your purpose to others'?**
- **What perspective can you have instead to recognize the value you bring to the table?**

Acts ends with Paul in a prison cell. But the story of the church did not end shackled in Rome. The living story of Acts is now being written through us, through those who have come before us, and through those after us.

- **Reflect for a moment: Name one person who strengthened your faith. It can be the ministry leader who invited you in, the person who led you to salvation, or someone who opened your eyes to what God is doing in your life.**
- **As you leave this study, what specific acts of faithfulness will you practice to help build and establish God's church?**

## **THE BOTTOM LINE / *what is my main takeaway?***

To use the unique gifts and circumstances God has given us to accomplish His mission for our lives.