

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
DEVOTIONAL 

**WEEK SIX**

# DAY ONE

**SCRIPTURE**     Read Acts 21:1-16

## QUESTIONS

1. In Acts 19:21, Paul decides to go to Jerusalem. In Acts 20:16, Paul is in a hurry to get to Jerusalem. By Acts 20:22 Paul says he's now compelled by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was a growing revelation in his heart. So why does Luke tell us about all these prophetic encounters and Christian communities dissuading Paul from going (Acts 21:1-16)?
2. Have you ever allowed circumstances, fear and other voices overrule a vision or a dream God has planted in your heart?
3. If so, is it time to re-vision it in the Holy Spirit and give God room to resurrect what was surrendered and lost?

## PRAYER

Father, I am your child, and I desire to give you glory on earth. I want to fulfil all you called me to do. Please forgive me of letting fear and disappointment overcloud your word in me. Here I am. Right now. Speak, I am ready to hear. Breath again on the dead bones. Blow on the coals that are going out. Bind up the bruise in my heart and let me run again like the Apostle Paul who was so lost and misguided without you.

Amen

# DAY TWO

**SCRIPTURE**     Read Acts 21:17-26

## QUESTIONS

1. In verses, 17-20 Paul tells the elders in Jerusalem what God is doing among the Gentiles. The elders tell Paul what God is doing among the Jews. Why did James want Paul to know that all these new Jewish Christians were zealous for the law?
2. The false rumours that Paul teaches Jewish believers to ignore the law worried the elders. Do you think the elders' solution was expedient or Spirit-led (verses 22-26)?
3. So far, through this chapter, we are repeatedly challenged on how we align ourselves with the will of God. The crowd (verses 4 and 12), were opposed to Paul's conviction (verses 13-14). Paul follows the elders' suggestion regarding the law and how the people of Jerusalem will react to him (verse 26). How do you align yourself with the will of God in the circumstances you encounter each day?

## PRAYER

Lord, I admit I don't always get it right. Like these people I read about in the book of Acts, I see only a reflection as in a mirror (1 Cor. 13:12). I'm not asking you to perfect all my thoughts, gropings to find you, or my spiritual evaluations. It seems the process of aligning myself with your will is what matures me in your Holy Spirit. But what I do ask is that through it all, whether right or wrong, I will be motivated by the love you planted in me!

Amen

# DAY THREE

**SCRIPTURE**     Read Acts 21:27:40

## QUESTIONS

1. Paul knew that he was going to be arrested and mistreated when he entered Jerusalem (20:22; 21:4,10-11). Paul is not a superman, but his love for Jesus compels him to go despite what lies ahead. Do you ever weigh up the outcome and circumstances before you obey the leading of the Holy Spirit?
2. Paul had many opportunities and Christian communities to support and commend him if he decided not to enter that city. What do you do when you sense God telling you to do something uncomfortable, crazy or even life-threatening? Do you allow your friends to talk you out of it?
3. All the accusations against Paul were false or misinformed. How do we respond to misunderstanding or false rumours and gossip?

## PRAYER

Dear Father, I know love is best expressed through action rather than words. Sometimes I have more words than action or obedience. Forgive me for the times I loved myself and put my welfare above your plan and purpose for my life. Come Holy Spirit and do your holy work in my heart. May my life honour you above myself.

Amen

# DAY FOUR

**SCRIPTURE**     Read Acts 22:1-22

## QUESTIONS

1.     What a testimony. In these few verses, we find Paul laying out his credentials. His divine right to minister came about through trances, prophecies, declarations of purpose, revelation of and by Jesus, blindness (which signified his life up to this point), miraculously seeing again (signifying his new life). The crowd listened to Paul's story until he mentioned the Gentiles. Do you have an adverse reaction towards any person, nationality or organisation when you hear them mentioned?
2.     Have you ever asked God to show you the root cause of your response towards them: jealousy, fear, misunderstanding, not believing what you believe, bad encounters?
3.     Love doesn't appear to be in the heart of these Jewish people standing against Paul. I find it disturbing how religion often leads to murder. It didn't take much to stir up this crowd. What does it take to stir you up?

## PRAYER

Father God, may your love rule in my heart at all times in every circumstance. I lay down my agendas. I look to you to keep me right in my thoughts, my reactions, my responses towards all those you created in your image. Show me how to love my enemies. Help me to be like you and reach out and heal the earless person who comes to arrest and crucify me (Luke 22:50-51).

Amen

# DAY FIVE

**SCRIPTURE**     Read Acts 22:23-23:10

## QUESTIONS

1. The Romans throughout these chapters appear more civilised and honourable than the Jewish mob. The mob wanted blood; the Roman commander wanted the truth regarding Paul and his accusers. Paul wisely stated he was a Roman citizen which saved him from flogging and garnered him some preferential treatment (verses 23-29). If Paul never mentioned his status, we would be reading a different story. Funny, how little things can change the course of events. Consider the little things God has pre-arranged and set up for the course of your life. Paul was more concerned about his Jewishness and his relationship to Israel, but he wasn't afraid to use his unsavoury circumstances to further God's call. Is there some little thing God put in your life that can further his cause: a testimony, a miracle, a talent, a gift? Do you use it and talk about it? If not, why not?
2. I love Acts 23:6. Paul knew the Pharisees believed in the resurrection, and the Sadducees rejected it. So he uses this information to his advantage. He highlights his theological position: "I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead." Knowledge gives power. Wisdom on how to use that knowledge comes from God. James 1:5 tells us God will give wisdom to anyone who asks him. Do you need wisdom? When was the last time you asked God for it and believed you received it?
3. Acts 23:11 shows us how God was paying close attention to Paul. How do we measure success? Jesus appeared to Paul and told him Paul completed his task in Jerusalem. However, from a human perspective, it seems all Paul did was kindle riots, upset the population, fight to save his own skin and stymied the Roman government. Would we consider this a success? It doesn't read as Acts chapter two, does it? Perhaps, in God's eyes, you are more successful than you think. How do you measure success?

## PRAYER

Father may I fulfil all you called me to do in every circumstance of my life. I trust in you to do it. I don't trust myself. Give me the wisdom to know your ways and not disdain the little things you've put in my hands or moulded into my life to achieve your purpose. Paul was like an arrow shot from your bow, and he didn't waver in his passion for you or your mission; Oh Lord give me som-adat!

Amen

# DAY SIX

**SCRIPTURE**     Read Acts 23:12-35

## QUESTIONS

1. In these verses, Luke goes into great detail describing the plot and escape of Paul. He even quotes and spells out the letter written to Felix. All this information wasn't essential to move the story forward. What is God, through Luke, trying to communicate to us?
2. Throughout chapters 21-24 (and in the earlier and later chapters of the book) we see the Gentile Romans protecting Paul, as the Jews hysterically speak out against him wanting to put him down and silence his message. We watch as the gospel progressively slides out of the Jewish camp into the Gentile world. God wanted the Jews to embrace the gospel, not reject it, but they couldn't accept the new and hold onto the old system. God is not stagnant. He is always on the go, but the temptation is to slow down and get comfortable on the journey. What old approaches do you defend and hold onto, because they worked or blessed you in the past? Is God prompting you to lay something down that was good in the past but is just not relevant to what he is doing today?
3. How do I personally keep myself free to follow God and not venerate old attitudes, cultural biases, or ways to do mission and church?

## PRAYER

Jesus, I am not smart enough, or sufficiently aware to evaluate all you are doing in this season. Open my eyes, Lord, I want to see Jesus. I'm trusting you to lead me, not in my ability to follow. My faith is in you, not myself. Help me to adopt your attitudes and opinions. May I never resist, quench or grieve your Holy Spirit. I want to be where you are; not just in the right location but also spiritually present in the right time and season and your frame of mind. Hold my hand Daddy, without you, I don't know the way.

Amen

# DAY SEVEN

**SCRIPTURE**     Read Acts 24:1-27

## QUESTIONS

1. The primary title describing the followers of Jesus in this chapter and the book of Acts is "the Way" (9:2; 19:9 and 23; 22:4; 24:14 and 22). The title refers to a way of life. The method of salvation. The way of thinking and doing things. Some believe there are many ways to God, and many ways to please him and Christianity just happens to be one of them. We can compare that line of thinking to the idols of the ancient world. But, the book of Acts and the Bible make it very clear: there is only one God and only one way to salvation. However, to Paul, we know that "the Way" he spoke about wasn't an alternative lifestyle but a person. As Jesus said: "I am the way" (John 14:6). To live in "the Way" is to live in Jesus; not just doing Jesus things, but doing "Jesus things" in him, by him and through him - being led and energised by and through the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Do you ever find yourself doing "Jesus things" (WWJD) in your own strength and your own fashion and timing - leaving him behind?
2. Up to this chapter in the story, Paul has left God's mark on the world. He has fought many battles and has had extraordinary encounters with Jesus. He obeyed his conviction to go to Jerusalem even though he knew it would cost him (even his own life). We see God's hand directing, prompting and guiding Paul. God was using all these circumstances to get Paul to Rome (the centre of the Gentile world). Paul was in "the Way". How do you keep yourself daily in "the Way"?
3. Are you (we) following in "the Way", or are we just doing "Jesus things"?

## PRAYER

Jesus, we know you didn't just give us a Bible and say: "Get out there and give it your best shot!" Instead, you gave us the Holy Spirit who consistently breathes life into your word and directs our life in "the Way". Help me to live in and through you, abiding in "the Way"—me in you; you in me, embraced by the Holy Spirit. Jesus, you are the way. Forgive me of the times I put Christian duty and Christian activity above a living, loving relationship with you.

Amen



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