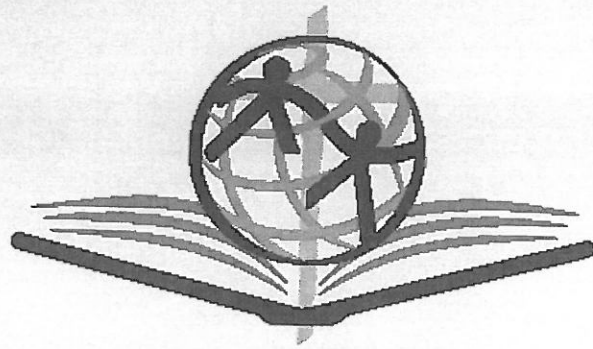


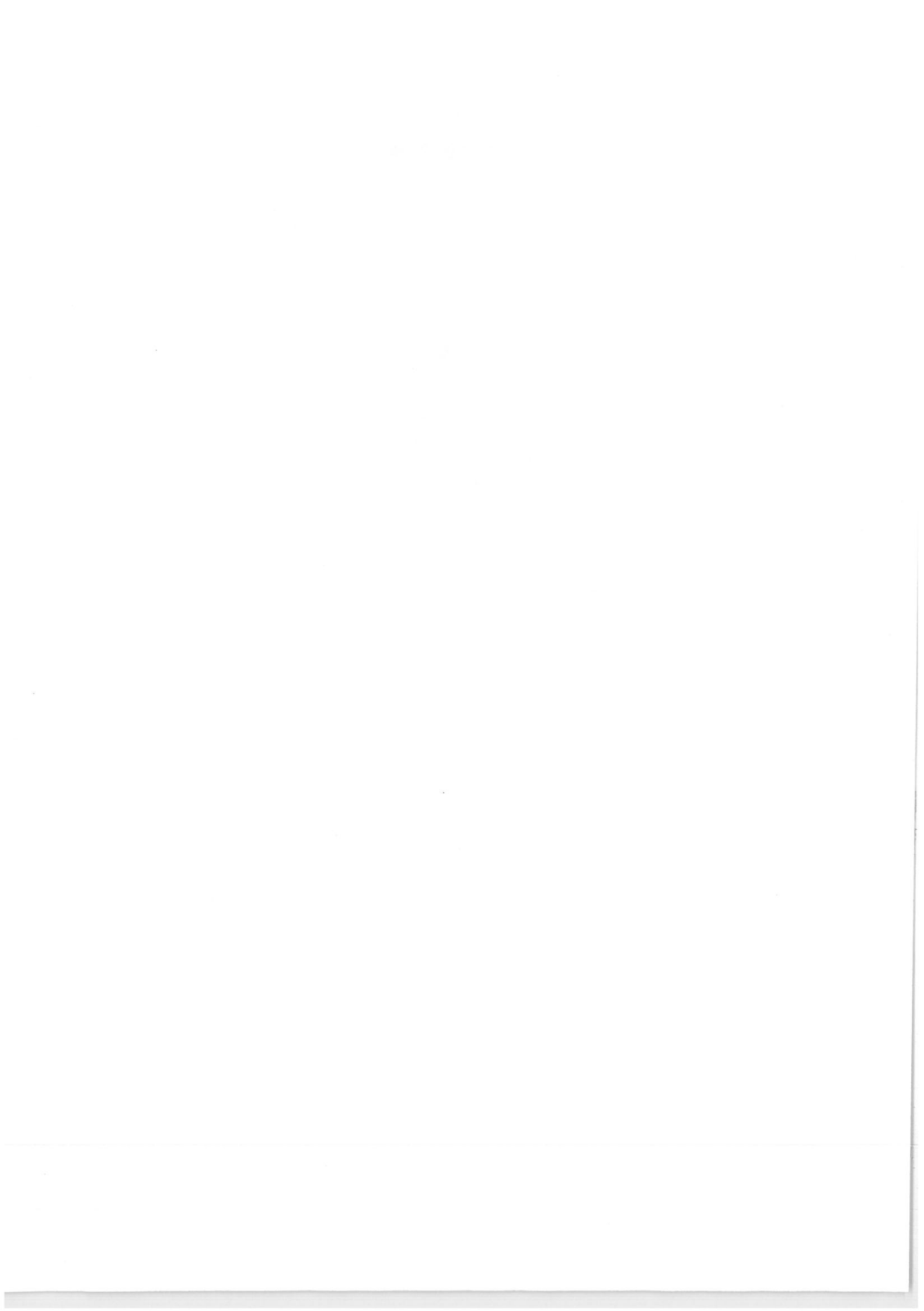


**RAFIKI
BIBLE STUDY
FOR GROUPS**

ACTS

Study Questions

Rafiki Foundation Inc





RAFIKI

RBS
Acts 1:1 – 2:47

Acts Lesson 1

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 1:1 – 2:47.

1. How is the role of the Holy Spirit in New Testament times the same as it was in the Old Testament? See 1 Peter 1:10-12; John 16:12-15; John 3:3-8; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Galatians 4:28-29.
2. How is the Holy Spirit's role different in New Testament times from his role in the Old Testament period? See Numbers 11:29; Joel 2:28-29; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.
3. How do believers experience the Holy Spirit today?
4. In Acts 1:16, Peter says that the Scripture had to be fulfilled concerning Judas, which the Holy Spirit spoke through David. How many other places can you find in these two chapters where Old Testament Scriptures are fulfilled?
5. God used many authors, writing over hundreds of years, to give us our Holy Bible. In what ways are these authors' many stories really only aspects of one story?
6. What does Acts 2 tell us about who can be saved?
7. What do we need to do to obtain salvation?

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8. What has the Lord done and what does he continue to do for our salvation?

 9. The evangelical church in our day has trouble with the Holy Spirit, some branches overemphasizing his gifts while others seem to ignore his work altogether. How should we relate to this third Person of the Godhead?

 10. As you reflect on Luke's portrait of the church's life together in the days after Pentecost (Acts 2:42-47), do you see ways that your *group* could be deepened with in faith? How about your life of *prayer* together?



Acts Lesson 2

RBS
Acts 3:1 – 4:31

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 3:1 – 4:31.

1. Rather than the lame man or Peter, it is Jesus who is the main figure in this story. What do each of these descriptions of Jesus reveal about him?

Christ; the Christ appointed for you (3:6, 18, 20; 4:10)

Servant (3:13, 26; 4:27, 30)

Holy and Righteous One (3:14)

Author of life (3:15)

Prophet (3:22-23)

Cornerstone (4:11)

God's anointed (4:26-27)

2. During Jesus' earthly ministry, he authorized his disciples to heal diseases and afflictions and to cast out demons (Matthew 10:1). What significance do you see in this first healing miracle after Jesus' death and resurrection?
3. References to the power of Jesus' name appear throughout the account of the lame man's healing and its sequel.
 - a. How do you see God's "name" used in other parts of Scripture?
 - b. How does the apostles' use of Jesus' name differ from ancient and modern magic?

4. In Peter's addresses in Acts 3 and 4, what charges did he lay at the feet of his Jewish audiences (the crowd in the temple, and then the leaders in the Sanhedrin)?

5. What actions did Peter say God has performed?

6. What basis of hope did Peter offer for the lame man, for "the people," and for their leaders?

7. Peter's sermon opens with the affirmation that Jesus, not Peter, has brought healing. It closes with the promise that Jesus turns people from their wickedness.
 - a. Why should the truth that Jesus alone saves humble us?

 - b. What should this truth encourage us to do?

8. As you read the prayer of these early believers (Acts 4:24-30) in light of the crisis they faced, what impresses you about their priorities? How do your priorities in prayer compare with theirs?



Acts Lesson 3

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 4:32 – 5:42.

1. Isn't it a beautiful thing that Joseph was called Barnabas, "son of encouragement"? How has God used some Christian as an encourager in your life? How could God use you to encourage someone else?
2. What are some of the reasons that we are tempted to lie? Who are affected by a lie?
3. Do you think the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira was too harsh? Why, or why not? What does your answer reveal about your perception of the holiness and presence of God's Spirit?
4. Why do you think God did so many signs and wonders at this particular time and place in the history of the church? What was the result?
5. Two people may read the same passage of Scripture, hear the same sermon or testimony, see the same signs of transformation in the life of a new convert. One may believe and be "*added to the Lord*" (Acts 5:14). The other may react with anger and denial, like the Jewish leaders. What can account for such different responses?
6. From Acts 5, what responsibility would you say that a speaker of good news carries, and what is not his responsibility?

7. Gamaliel said that if a plan or undertaking is of God, mere men can not prevail against it. How should we discern whether or not our plans are “of God”? How can Gamaliel’s insight encourage us when our service to Christ and to others for Jesus’ sake meets opposition and setbacks?
8. During their second arrest, the disciples were not only threatened, but also beaten. Why did they consider it an honor to suffer dishonor for the sake of Jesus?
9. There seems to have been an amazing unity in those earliest days of the church, despite wide disparity in background, language groups, and social and financial status. What do you think was the key to that unity? Is unity something that we can or should try to build?
10. How have you been called to “suffer dishonor” for the sake of Christ? Are you rejoicing?



Acts Lesson 4

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 6:1 – 7:60.

1. What differences between members in the Jerusalem church led to the discontent of Greek-speaking believers?
2. What differences between Christians today may threaten the unity of a congregation?
3. What features of the apostles' attitude, as well as the solution they proposed, defused the tension and restored harmony?
4. Why did the apostles refuse to neglect their preaching ministry in order to care for widows?
5. How do the qualifications they laid down for the leaders of mercy ministry show the importance, difficulty, and dignity of that ministry?
6. How did the developing leadership structure, with the seven charged to care for needy widows, further the evangelistic expansion of the church?

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7. Why did Stephen's preaching about Jesus provoke such strong opposition from the Jews from the Dispersion, who belonged to the synagogue of the freedmen? If the message about Jesus is good news, why do people find it threatening?
 8. Why do you think Stephen began his defense speech all the way back with Abraham, rather than just preaching about Jesus of Nazareth? (Where does Stephen actually mention Jesus—though not by name—in his speech?)
 9. What threads woven through redemptive history link Joseph, Moses, the prophets, and Jesus?
 10. How can you apply the qualifications for and importance of service through both teaching and deeds of mercy in your family and in Rafiki?
 11. How did Stephen follow the footsteps of his Master to death? How did Jesus respond to his servant Stephen's faithfulness?



Acts Lesson 5

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 8:1-40.

1. "*There arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem*" (Acts 8:1). Persecution has come upon Christians often over the years, and it still happens today. Why do you think God allows his church to be persecuted? What good did he bring from it in Acts 8?
2. What can you do to help brother and sister Christians who are being persecuted today?
3. Why might the report that "*Samaria had received the word of God*" raise eyebrows in the Jerusalem church and call for investigation? What was the history of the relationship between Jews and Samaritans? Can you think of similar situations today, in which the church might have trouble believing that a certain group had "*received the word of God*"?
4. Why did the Holy Spirit come upon the Samaritans at a later point, sometime *after* they had believed the gospel that Philip preached? Should we expect this two-step process as the normal pattern for Christians today? Why or why not? What other New Testament passages provide insight into this question?
5. What does Luke mean when he says that Simon the magician "*believed*" (Acts 8:13)? Think about what Peter said to Simon (Acts 8:20-23). Think also about Jesus' parable of the sower (Acts 13:3-9, 18-23) and where Simon might "*fit*" among the various soils. Can Christians lose their salvation? Why or why not? What New Testament texts address this question?

6. What do the Ethiopian eunuch's trip to Jerusalem, Philip's orders to head for the Gaza road, and the eunuch's reading of Isaiah 53 at the time of their meeting tell you about *the person of God*?
7. In his own country, the Ethiopian eunuch had power, wealth, and respect. Yet two obstacles had kept him on the margins of the people of God, despite his devotion. What were those obstacles? What types of people today, like the Ethiopian, would have difficulty gaining acceptance to the church. Why? How might Jesus relate to them?
8. God used the persecution of the church and the resulting "diaspora" to bring the gospel to new areas and people groups. He brought Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch together to bring about the eunuch's salvation and the gospel's entry into Africa. As you look back over your own life, how can you see that God has sovereignly worked through circumstances to get you where he wanted you, for your own good and to impact other people?
9. To the Jewish believers in Jesus at that time, the despised, mixed-blood Samaritans and the foreign eunuch would have seemed very unlikely recipients of God's glorious salvation. Who are the people or groups you might think are beyond God's grace? Have you neglected to share the gospel with them because they are so unlikely to accept it? If so, what will you do about it?



Acts Lesson 6

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 9:1-43.

1. What was there in Saul's background that might have led to his burning zeal against the disciples of Jesus?
2. Why do you think God would call a man like Saul to be a leader of his church?
3. Was anyone praying for Saul's conversion? (See Acts 7:60 – 8:1.) Does someone come to your mind whose conversion would be as "impossible" as Saul's? Will you pray consistently for that person?
4. What did Jesus imply about his church when he accused Saul, "Why are you persecuting me?" How did Saul (that is, Paul) later bring out these implications in his epistles?
5. The Lord told Ananias that he had chosen Saul "to carry my name before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15). This points to the fact that including Gentiles in his church was integral to his plan, not incidental. What other passages of Scripture show that Gentiles were always part of God's plan?
6. Are you a Gentile? How do you respond to the fact that God planned all along for your welcome and inclusion into his church?

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7. What do you think it means to “walk in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit”? Why would people living like that cause the church to grow?
 8. How did Peter reveal his dependence on the Lord Jesus in raising Aeneas from his mat? In raising Tabitha from the dead?
 9. How can we practice genuine dependence on Christ’s power as we serve others?
 10. In mercy Christ “captured” Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, both for salvation and for service in Christ’s kingdom. Will you share how Christ “captured” you?
 11. Paul used his conversion testimony many times in his missionary work (for example, Acts 22:3-21; 26:2-23; 1 Timothy 1:12-16), and he used his Christian experience in his pastoral counsel to believers (for example, 2 Corinthians 12:1-10; Philippians 1:12-30). Residents of Lydda and Sharon turned to the Lord because they saw Aeneas walking again after years of paralysis. Many in Joppa believed in the Lord because they saw Tabitha restored to life and caring for widows. What role should our personal testimonies play in the way we share the gospel with others?



Acts Lesson 7

RBS
Acts 10:1 – 11:18

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 10:1 – 11:18.

1. What qualities and practices set Cornelius apart from most Roman soldiers and other Gentiles? Did these things give Cornelius a right to God's favor? Why, or why not?
2. Why was Peter shocked at God's command during the vision on the rooftop? What was the religious significance of the dietary restrictions given to Israel in Leviticus?
3. How did Peter's response (10:14) show that he had not fully grasped Jesus' teaching in Mark 7? In what ways are we tempted to blame outside influences as being the source of our defilement before God?
4. When Cornelius met Peter, a messenger sent from God, he bowed down in worship. Peter lifted him up with the reminder that he, Peter, was simply a man. Yet he was a man entrusted with the Word of God. How should we regard pastors and teachers whom God has given us?
5. Even before he knew what Peter would say, Cornelius had summoned his relatives and close friends to be there. Why? And what would be the result? Do you have relatives or friends you could invite to listen to the preaching and teaching of God's Word?

6. In his sermon to Cornelius and his friends, Peter referred to Jesus' crucifixion in words drawn from Deuteronomy 21:23. Paul used these words in Galatians 3:13 to explain how Gentiles, as well as Jews, can receive forgiveness and the Holy Spirit of God. What is the connection between Jesus' death as one "hanged on a tree" and the blessings we receive by faith in him?
7. Why is it important for your faith that the apostles, like Peter here with Cornelius, continually stressed their calling as witnesses to Jesus' resurrection?
8. How was the church to know that the inclusion of the Gentiles was God's idea and not Peter's?
9. Over Peter's protests, to the astonishment of his companions from Joppa, and despite opposition from the "circumcision party," God dismantled the barrier separating Jew and Gentile once for all. The heart of the issue is, in fact, the heart. What does this tell us about all of the other walls that so easily divide people in the church?



Acts Lesson 8

RBS
Acts 11:19 – 12:25

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 11:19 – 12:25.

1. Why was Barnabas sent to Antioch when news of the Lord's blessing on the multi-ethnic church reached Jerusalem? What features of his background and personality made him the ideal choice to encourage and guide this church? What qualities in Barnabas reflect the beauty of Jesus and deserve to be cultivated in your own life?
2. How did the church at Jerusalem minister to the church at Antioch? How did the church at Antioch minister to the church at Jerusalem? How should different congregations, even in different locations, serve each other through the gifts that God has given to each?
3. James, son of Zebedee, became the first apostle to be martyred. Where are Christians answering Christ's call to be "*faithful unto death*" today (Revelation 2:10)? How can we help them?
4. What does the soundness of Peter's sleep tell us about his confidence in God's care? Compare or contrast the sleep described in Psalm 3:5-6; Mark 4:38; and Luke 22:45. How should we respond to anxiety-induced insomnia?
5. The Christians who were praying for Peter's release had trouble believing that God had answered their prayers. What recent event might have led them to doubt? Do you sometimes offer "double-minded" requests to God, doubting that your Father is willing or able to provide for you (James 1:6-8)? Why do we struggle to pray in confident faith?

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6. All of us can succumb, as King Herod did, to the temptation to divert glory from God to ourselves (although usually we are subtler than he was). How are you tempted to steal God's glory, even in little ways? Why does God take such offense at this sin?

 7. Acts 12:24 is the second summary that speaks of the growth and spread of God's Word. How are you participating in that growth of the Word today through witness, teaching, service, prayer, or giving to Rafiki? What fruit do you see developing in your own life as a result of the Word's organic power and life?

 8. This week's study brings us to the close of the second section of Acts, the spread of God's Word throughout Judea and Samaria. Think back over the past lessons and share how your perspective on the church and your calling as a Christian is changing:
 - a. How is this growth in your convictions being worked out in your priorities and behavior?

 - b. How has it affected your relationship with the Lord?



Acts Lesson 9

Questions for Discussion

RBS
Acts 13:1 – 14:28

Read Acts 13:1 – 14:28.

1. "World missions begin in worship." Is this more than a mere historical observation of the time of prayer and fasting at Antioch, when the Holy Spirit called Barnabas and Saul to take God's Word to other lands? What is there about truly worshiping the true, triune God that should propel us to witness and to support the advance of the gospel? Psalm 96 was sung in Israel's worship: what does it call Israelite worshipers to communicate to the nations? How could you help to communicate the gospel through Rafiki?
2. What is the symbolism of the judgment imposed on Elymas Bar-Jesus, the "magician?" Is it possible for someone to have perfect eyesight and still be blind? How can such blindness be healed?
3. In the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch, what theological and pastoral points did Paul make in his selective survey of Israel's history? Where was his message leading?
4. What can Jesus do for us that the law cannot (Acts 13:38-39)? Where does Paul teach this same point in his letters? How does this truth calm your guilty conscience? How does this truth open up salvation to the Gentiles?
5. "*The people of the city were divided*" (Acts 14:4). Why does the gospel divide people wherever it is taken seriously?

6. What are the similarities between the healing of the crippled man in Lystra and the healing of the crippled man at the temple in Jerusalem (Acts 3)? How do the attitudes of Paul and Peter in those two instances differ from the attitude of King Herod (12:21-23)? What made them different?
7. In both chapters 13 and 14, Paul and Barnabas take their message first to the synagogue in towns that had one. Why?
8. How does Paul's speech in Lystra differ from his sermon in the synagogue at Antioch? Why does it differ in this way? Discuss how the previous experience and belief system of those to whom we witness should influence our approach in communicating God's truth to them.
9. In Acts we see Paul sharing the gospel with Jews well-versed in the Old Testament Scriptures, with pagans educated in cosmopolitan philosophies, with believers in classic Greek and Roman mythologies, with adherents of magic and mystery cults. What belief systems are held by people with whom you have contact? As you think of a friend or relative who is not a Christian, what would be an appropriate way to introduce them to the truth of Christ, in view of what he or she presently believes and values?



Acts Lesson 10

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 15:1 – 16:40.

1. Peter reminded the apostolic council that, when he brought the gospel to the Gentiles, God “made no distinction” between Gentiles and Jews. How are we all alike in relationship to the law of God? In relation to the grace of God?
2. What did Peter’s speech, Paul’s and Barnabas’ report, and James’s speech *each* contribute to the council’s final decision?
3. What can we learn from this process for our own decision-making, whether as individuals or when working together with fellow believers?
4. What were the four prohibitions that the council gave to Gentile believers? What was the foundational rationale behind these restrictions? How should we apply this rationale in our own culture?
5. Why did the council supplement their encouraging letter to the Gentiles by sending it with encouraging leaders, Judas and Silas? What can “in person” conversation accomplish that written communication (including e-mail) cannot?
6. If Paul had commended the churches of Asia Minor to the care of the Lord (Acts 14:23), why did Paul feel the need to visit them again and strengthen them (Acts 15:36, 41)? How did Paul exemplify a sound grasp of the relationship between God’s sovereignty and our responsibility?

7. Why did Luke record the conflict between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:37-40)? What does it reveal about even the most godly leaders? How should this affect our attitude toward our pastors and other Christian leaders, and our ministry to them?
8. In circumcising Timothy, was Paul betraying what he had defended so strongly at Antioch and in the apostolic council? Why, or why not? What principle drove his decision to circumcise Timothy?
9. Why did Lydia believe the gospel when Paul preached it by the riverside? Should we trace the jailer's faith to the same source? What passages of Scripture would support your conclusion?
10. Have you experienced "closed doors," as Paul's team did when trying to enter Asia and Bithynia, only to learn later the unexpected direction that the Lord intended to take you? Share your experience with others, for their encouragement.
11. How could Paul and Silas sing in the jail at Philippi, with welts on their backs and stocks on their ankles? Paul's letter to the Christians of Philippi often mentions joy. Where does such joy—utterly independent of circumstances—come from?



Acts Lesson 11

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 17:1 – 18:22.

1. At Thessalonica, jealous Jews accused Paul of defying Caesar's decrees and proclaiming another king, Jesus. Was their charge true or false—or partly true? Should governmental authorities be concerned that Christians' loyalty to Jesus has priority to our loyalty to the nation? Why or why not?
2. What should our non-Christian neighbors notice about our relationship to the local and national government?
3. How did the Bereans receive the teaching of Paul and Silas? What lesson can you learn from the Bereans' example?
4. In speaking to the philosophers at the Areopagus in Athens, why did Paul begin as he did? How did his strategy and approach to persuasion differ from the way he spoke in synagogues? Why did he develop his argument as he did, even quoting pagan poets?
5. How can Paul's strategy influence our own strategy for presenting the message of Christ in our secularized, postmodern culture?
6. Paul returned to the theme of Jesus' resurrection by mentioning the last judgment. Why is the reality of future judgment an important truth for people to understand and believe, in order for them to understand Christ's cross and resurrection?

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7. Why was Paul willing to work as a tentmaker, when other Hellenistic teachers demanded payment for their wisdom? What fundamental principle of the gospel was he trying to express in this aspect of his life? (See 1 Corinthians 9.)

 8. Do you usually think of Paul as needing special encouragement from the Lord when facing opposition (Acts 18:9-11)? When we take seriously his weakness and fear, how does this encourage us to expect the Lord to use us for his glory?

 9. The message of Christ inevitably posed a threat to the institutionalized religious pluralism of the Hellenistic-Roman world. Such a message—that Christ alone is God and Savior and Judge of all—could be seen as dangerous, insulting to civic dignity, and disruptive of the fabric of social order (Acts 17:6). How does this compare with the situation in your own culture? In as much of the African culture as you know?

 10. What are the advantages of clothing our presentation of the gospel in the vocabulary and concepts that are familiar in pagan cultures? What are the dangers? How can we avoid falling into those dangers?



Acts Lesson 12

Questions for Discussion

RBS
Acts 18:23 – 20:38

Read Acts 18:23 – 20:38.

1. How did God use Priscilla and Aquila at this time in Ephesus? How are they models for us?
2. What are the similarities and the differences between Apollos and the twelve “disciples” at Ephesus? How did the experience of some who came to faith in the early years narrated in Acts (recall also the Samaritans in Acts 8 and Cornelius in Acts 10) differ from what the New Testament epistles show us to be normal Christian experience today?
3. In our day there are varying types and degrees of misunderstanding of biblical doctrine among groups claiming to be Christian. What are the essentials that a group must believe to claim legitimately the name of Christ?
4. In Corinth and Ephesus, as elsewhere, Paul began his ministry in the city’s Jewish synagogue. Why did he do this over and over again? (See Romans 1:16-17; Acts 9 – 11.) Should the church still place a high priority on evangelizing the Jewish people? Why, or why not?
5. Jewish exorcists thought to draw forth power by using Jesus’ name to cast out demons (Acts 19:13). In our own day, people still seek to use the name of Jesus for their own interests, whether in politics or in religion or in commerce. In what does the true power of Jesus’ name lie?

6. *"Fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled"* (Acts 19:17). Does God want his children to be fearful? What are right and wrong kinds of fear?
7. The Ephesian silversmiths resented Paul's preaching because it cut into their profits, but they recruited the angry mob by appealing to civic pride. Do you know people who reject Christ because his Lordship could jeopardize their income or their place in the community? What are they failing to see when they choose money or social standing over Jesus?
8. What should the Ephesian elders learn from remembering the example of Paul's ministry among them?
9. How should Paul's example not only guide our elders but also motivate us all to communicate God's whole message at every opportunity?
10. What do you think kept Paul going in all of these travels and "homelessness?" What keeps you going in the calling God has given you?
11. What kinds of "leadership training" do we see Paul employ (drawing from Acts and from his epistles)? How can his example influence the way you encourage people whom you teach or train?



RAFIKI

RBS
Acts 21:1 – 22:29

Acts Lesson 13

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 21:1 – 22:29.

1. When Agabus predicted that Paul would be bound and handed over to the Gentiles in Jerusalem, other Christians immediately concluded that Paul should not go there. Why did Paul travel to Jerusalem anyway? What was more important to him than his personal safety? What is more important to you, really?
2. James advised Paul to participate in the ritual for brothers who had taken a Nazirite vow, forfeiting some of his personal freedom for the church's peace and its testimony to other Jews. Is this always the right thing to do? (Remember Paul's stubbornness at the apostolic council, or when demanding an apology from the magistrates in Philippi.)
3. How do we decide when and why to give up our own rights and when to stand up for them?
4. In Paul's defense before the Jewish people in the temple courts, he describes his "Jewish credentials." What were they?
 - a. Acts 22:1-21
 - b. Galatians 1:13-14
 - c. Philippians 3:4-11
5. What was Paul's evaluation of these achievements after he met Jesus? Why?

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6. Of what abilities, virtues, or achievements are you inclined to boast?

 7. According to Ananias, for what purpose did God choose Paul? Apart from receiving a direct revelation as Paul did, how can you discern God's purpose for your life? While Paul's calling was unique, are there aspects of his calling that apply to you too?

 8. Was Paul being unsubmitive toward the government's authority (Romans 13:1-5) when he mentioned his Roman citizenship as the soldiers were about to flog him? Why, or why not? When and how is it appropriate for Christians to defend their rights under civil law?

 9. Acts 21—22 has a lot to say about "rights." Claiming rights or yielding them for a greater good is a daily decision, perhaps not to avoid riots or lashings, but in marriage, in the church, Rafiki Groups, and in lifestyle evangelism. What do we learn from other passages of Scripture that should guide us as we try to discern when to claim our "rights" and when to forego them out of love for Christ and others? Discuss, for example, Philippians 2:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 8-9.

 10. Paul said, *"I am ready not only to be imprisoned but also even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus"* (Acts 21:13). What risk or cost is the Lord calling you to put in the middle of that sentence? "I am ready to _____ for the name of the Lord Jesus."



RAFIKI

Acts Lesson 14

Questions for Discussion

RBS
Acts 22:30 – 24:27

Read Acts 22:30 – 24:27.

1. Was Paul sincerely apologetic for having called the high priest a “whitewashed wall?” What leads you to believe that he was or was not? What should our attitude be toward a leader whose evil conduct dishonors his office?
2. Since the Lord told Paul that he “must” testify in Rome, did the actions of Paul’s nephew, the centurion, and the commander Claudius Lysius really make any difference in averting Paul’s assassination? Explain your answer.
3. We cannot always discern God’s guiding hand of providence in our daily lives, but sometimes we can. Recall an experience in which you have seen God’s good plan worked out through the decisions of other people.
4. What are the similarities and the differences of style between Tertullus’ prosecution speech and Paul’s defense speech?
5. Christians engaged in society (work, politics, academics, etc.) often wrestle with the issue of how different Christ calls us to be from unbelieving co-workers, colleagues, or competitors. What are some of the dilemmas that you have faced in your engagement with the broader culture? How do the examples of Paul in Felix’s court and of Daniel and his friends in Babylon (Daniel 1) help us discern how to interact with nonbelievers, without compromise?

6. Why does Paul's hope in the resurrection motivate him to keep his conscience clear before God and man? Compare this with the conclusion of Paul's great resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15:58. Does your resurrection hope actually function as a motivation in your daily decisions? If not, why do you think it does not?
7. What strengths and weaknesses of Governor Felix's character are exposed by his treatment of Paul?
8. What opportunity of eternal significance confronted the governor? How and why did he miss that opportunity?
9. The implication of Acts 24:26 is that Felix might have been willing to release Paul if Paul had paid him a bribe. With Paul's burning desire to preach Christ to Jews and Gentiles, it must have been hard to sit in prison for two years. Why do you think he (or his friends) did not pay the bribe? Have you ever wrestled with a situation where a bribe was expected? How did you handle it?
10. Humanly speaking, Paul would have been justified if he felt God had allowed him to be treated very unfairly. He had come to Jerusalem with good intentions, bringing alms for the Jewish poor. He had submitted to Jewish sensitivities, participating in a purification ritual and paying the expenses of four other Jews completing their vows. He had not brought a Greek into the temple, as alleged. He had not even had opportunity yet to preach in Jerusalem on this visit. He had not stirred up the crowds. Yet now he sat—for two years—in prison. From what you know of Paul in Acts and through his writings, how do you think he coped with this "injustice"?
11. What Scriptures have been of comfort to you when you have had to live through periods of trial?



Acts Lesson 15

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 25:1 – 26:32.

1. Why did Festus not simply release Paul, in view of his belief in Paul's innocence? How did his attempt to please his "constituency" backfire?
2. How have you seen an effort to avoid conflict breed bigger problems in the long run?
3. What remaining task did Festus need to complete before Paul could be sent to Caesar's court in Rome? Why did this assignment pose a problem for him?
4. The third retelling of Paul's conversion in his defense before King Agrippa parallels the first two (Acts 9 and 22) in many respects. What themes and emphases make it unique? Why did Paul stress these points in addressing the king?
5. What are the two roles that the Lord assigned to Paul (Acts 26:16)? Do all believers receive a similar dual calling? How does that work out in your own life?
6. In Paul's speech before Agrippa, what four benefits of the gospel does he mention? What universal human needs do these benefits meet? From what does the gospel set us free?

7. The king entered the auditorium with pageantry. Paul entered in chains. Yet Paul saw himself as the happiest, most privileged person in the room, longing for everyone else to enjoy what he had (except for the chains). What did Paul have that Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice lacked? Why was it sweeter to him than his freedom, or even life itself?
8. In Paul's travels throughout Acts, his preaching sometimes met immediate conversion, sometimes the most vehement rejection, and sometimes what we see in Felix, Festus, and Agrippa—interest in hearing him but no recorded acceptance of his message. What made the difference in the way Paul's preaching was received? Do you think Paul truly thought Agrippa might be persuaded to become a Christian?
9. If you believe in the sovereignty of God—or if you do not—how does that part of your “theology” influence the way that you present the gospel to others?



RAFIKI

RBS
Acts 27:1 – 28:31

Acts Lesson 16

Questions for Discussion

Read Acts 27:1 – 28:31.

1. In his imprisonment and in the storm, Paul drew comfort from the truth that he belonged, body and soul, to his faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. In the storms of your own life, do you find the same comfort? Why does our emotional response to stress or crisis sometimes seem “disconnected” from what we say we believe? How can we become more integrated people, whose feelings and values correspond to our convictions?
2. As the ship neared Malta, at least four obstacles stood in the way of the fulfillment of God’s promise that no one on board would die. What were they?
3. How did the exercise of human responsibility by Paul and by the centurion Julius contribute to the fulfillment of God’s sovereign purpose?
4. If the natives of Malta were pagans, dead in trespasses and sins (as their belief that Paul was a god suggests), how could they extend such compassionate hospitality to the castaway? How should we think about the integrity and kindness of unbelievers such as the Maltese or Julius the centurion?
5. What do we learn about Paul as a person through his contacts with the Christians at Sidon, Puteoli, and Rome, at either end of his long voyage? His letters also reveal a man who relied on his brothers and sisters in Christ for comfort and refreshment (2 Corinthians 2:1-4; 6:11-13; Galatians 4:12-20; Philippians 4:1). Is it a sign of shameful weakness to need others so much? Why, or why not?

6. Paul had two motives, one legal and one pastoral, for wanting to meet with the leaders of the Jewish synagogues in Rome. What were those motives for initiating contact?
7. Review the variety of circumstances throughout Acts in which Paul creatively brought the conversation around to Jesus. What interactions with others have you been able to turn into openings for the gospel?
8. Repeatedly throughout Acts we have heard that Paul proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah from the Law of Moses and the prophets (Acts 28:23). What texts might he have used? Can you show where the Old Testament Scriptures teach that the Messiah must suffer and then rise from the dead to bring forgiveness of sins to those who trust him?
9. What is the purpose of the book of Acts? What are its main themes? How should it guide the faith and life of the church today?
10. What new insights have you gained from working through this study of Acts? How have these insights affected your attitudes and behavior in relation to Christ, his church, and its mission in the world?