

THE BOOK *of* ACTS

WELCOME to a course devoted to learning about the church in the book of Acts. In this brief study on chapters 1-13, we will journey through the powerful accounts of the early Church, exploring how the Holy Spirit empowered ordinary believers to carry out an extraordinary mission.

Our vision is not only to understand the historical and theological significance of Acts, but also to be stirred to action. Our prayer is that we be transformed ourselves, embracing the same Spirit-led boldness, unity, and purpose that marked the disciples of the early Church.

The course will highlight key themes such as the birth of the Church, signs and wonders, persecution, leadership, and the beginning of global evangelism. Our prayer is that you will be strengthened in your faith, equipped for Spirit-filled ministry, and inspired to partner with God in advancing His Kingdom... today!

Scan the code to go to the Institute blog, www.DiscipleshipDevelopment.org



THE MISSION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER'S INSTITUTE is to equip God's people to grow in character and to partner with Him in fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:35-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

This is a three-part activity where faith becomes action...

1. ACADEMICS

- Through an academic approach to Discipleship we come to see God's heart and His purpose for fruitful ministry and relationship. This is accomplished through a time of daily prayer, Bible reading, journaling, Scripture memorization, as well as Bible teaching and accountability. (2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

2. SERVICE

- A submitted servant's heart is the basis for leadership in the Church. This is accomplished by participating in the vision of the church and accomplishing the goals given to the leadership by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 8:7-10; John 13:3-17; Ephesians 4:16)

3. MISSIONS

- The mandate for disciples is to develop God's passion for the lost and to be involved in the Lord's Harvest on a local and global level. (Matthew 9:37-38; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)



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SECTION 1

THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Just before His ascension, Christ proclaimed the foundation of the Book of Acts *...But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.* (Acts 1:6-8) He also told them that to be filled with His Spirit is *better than* understanding end time eschatology!

1. **Acts 1:8 presents one of Jesus' most important commands to His disciples.** Without the supernatural empowerment of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, the disciples would have quickly collapsed under the weight of persecution and the pull of false teachings such as Gnosticism. The disciples desperately needed this power to continue to be His witnesses throughout the world!
2. This power (Divine force, miraculous ability, strength, and might) can only be experienced through an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit. That's why it's essential to know who the Holy Spirit is and how to walk in His power as a victorious disciple of Jesus Christ. And, we must always remember: **Jesus is the One who baptizes us in the Holy Spirit.**
3. We must also approach the study of the Holy Spirit with an understanding of our inability to grasp the full subject at hand. In studying the Person and work of the Holy Spirit, we are touching that which is close to the heart of God. It is well to use caution in studying this subject, seeking to be guided by the Holy Spirit himself.
 - The Holy Spirit does not become visible; He is to be spiritually discerned. Natural wisdom cannot comprehend Him.
 - The Holy Spirit does not focus on Himself. (John 16:13)
 - Much that we know about the Holy Spirit may be through subjective experiences, which are never safe guides from which to arrive at doctrine.

Books by Jack Hayford: "The Overflowing Power of the Holy Spirit" and "The Beauty of Our Spiritual Language."

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT? (John 14:16–17, 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7–8, 16:13–14)

1. **The Person** | The Holy Spirit is a Member of the Godhead, or Trinity.
 - The three members of the Godhead include: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. All three persons of the Trinity are clearly seen in the following passage.

Matthew 3:16-17 *As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."* (See also Genesis 1:26; 3:22; Isaiah 6:3)

- The Holy Spirit was sent into the world to remain with us forever after Jesus was glorified and ascended to Heaven.

John 14:16-17 *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.*

- The Holy Spirit possesses knowledge (Romans 8:27), feelings and emotions (Romans 15:30), a Will (1 Corinthians 12:4-11), and Divine Power (Ephesians 1:18-20).

2. **The Comforter or Counselor** | The words come from the Greek word, "parakletos," which means one called alongside to help.

- John 14:16 *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever...*

3. **The Teacher** | The Holy Spirit is the One who teaches us.

- John 14:26 *But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*

4. **Our Guide** | The Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Jesus) is our guide in life.

- John 16:13 *But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come.*
- Acts 16:6-7 *Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. (The Spirit was guiding them towards what would later become the powerful Philippian church!)*

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. In Creation.

- Genesis 1:1-2 *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was (destroyed) formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering (quivering) over the waters.*

2. One example of the ministry of the Spirit in the Old Testament...

- Numbers 11:25 *Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with (Moses), and he took some of the power of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied...* (Others include Genesis 41:38; Joshua in Deuteronomy 34:9; David in 1 Samuel 16:13)

- Artistic abilities and talents (Exodus 31:2-5)
- Power and supernatural strength (Samson in Judges 3:9-10)
- Prophecy (1 Samuel 19:20-23; Micah 3:8)
- Purifying and transforming the heart (Ezekiel 36:25-29)

Note: *Whenever the word “believer” is used, it does not refer to someone who intellectually agrees with the truth about Jesus, but to one who has made a deliberate decision to follow Him, a committed disciple in faith and lifestyle.*

3. The believer is born again and renewed by the Holy Spirit.
 - Titus 3:5-6 *He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,...*
4. The Holy Spirit lives in believers.
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19 *Your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you...*
 - John 4:4 *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*
5. The Holy Spirit gives power to be a witness of the things Christ has done in and through us. Even though there are many “benefits,” one of the main reasons Jesus sent the Holy Spirit was to empower us to be His witnesses and to spread the Gospel from where we live to the uttermost parts of the world.
 - Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*
6. The Holy Spirit convicts (convinces) people of sin. He reveals our sin, God’s forgiveness, and of Judgment to come.
 - John 16:8-10 *When He comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.*
7. The Holy Spirit bears witness to the believer’s sonship.
 - Romans 8:16 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children (Teknos).*
 - Galatians 4:6 *Because you are sons (Huioi), God sent the Spirit of his Son (Hui) into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.”*
 - The two words for children and sons/daughters of God | Teknon: “Child,” in John 1:12, emphasizing birth and relationship and Huioi: “Son,” in Romans 8:14, emphasizing maturity and status.
8. The Holy Spirit baptizes (fully immerses) believers into the Body of Christ.
 - 1 Corinthians 12:13 *For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body...*
9. The Holy Spirit places His seal of ownership upon the believer.

- Ephesians 1:13-14 *Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession...* (Ephesians 4:30)
 - Satan's counterfeit mark in Revelation 13:16-18.
10. The Holy Spirit sanctifies the believer.
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13 *...from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.* (1 Peter 1:2)
 - The Holy Spirit sets us apart (sanctifies) for God's use and purposes. The three phases of Sanctification: I have been saved (when I became a follower), I am being saved (our current stage), and I will be saved (glorified and in Heaven).
11. The Holy Spirit transforms the believer.
- 2 Corinthians 3:18 *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*
 - The Greek word for transformation is "Metamorphoo" and means a complete transformation, from the inside out, like a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. It's not just outward change, but a deep internal spiritual renewal. (Romans 12:2)
12. The Holy Spirit bears fruit in the believer's life.
- Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control....*
13. The Holy Spirit equips the believer for greater revelations of Christ.
- Ephesians 3:16-19 *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,... to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge...*
14. The Holy Spirit leads us as the sons and daughters of God. (Number 7)
- Romans 8:14 *...because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons (Huioi) of God.* (John 16:13; Galatians 5:18)
15. The Holy Spirit reveals truth and gives understanding of the Word of God.
- John 16:13-14 *But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth....* (1 Corinthians 2:11-14; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)
16. The Holy Spirit helps the believer to pray.
- Romans 8:26-27 *We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express...* (Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20)
17. The Holy Spirit gives power for preaching. Preaching is effective through the anointing of the Holy Spirit.
- 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.* (1 Thessalonians 1:5)

18. The Holy Spirit gives Spiritual gifts and abilities to believers.

- 1 Corinthians 12:8-11 *...All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines.*

19. The Holy Spirit inspired the writing of the Bible.

- 2 Peter 1:20-21 *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

20. We are to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit.

- Ephesians 5:18 *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be (continually) filled with the Spirit.*

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. **There are two views regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit.** One teaches that we are filled with the Holy Spirit at salvation. The other believes that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate experience following the new birth.
2. In John 20:19–22, after His Resurrection, Jesus breathed on (into) His disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Immediately they passed from Old Testament faith (salvation) into New Testament salvation... the Spirit was now *in* them. However, even though they were transformed, Jerusalem remained unchanged! It wasn’t until the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was *poured out in power* (Acts 2), that the disciples were empowered, and all of Jerusalem felt the impact!
3. We see a similar pattern in Acts 8. When Philip preached Christ in Samaria, many were saved, healed, and delivered. (Acts 8:5–8) However, the Holy Spirit had not yet fallen on any of them. It was only when Peter and John were sent from Jerusalem and laid hands on the new believers that they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
 - Acts 8:14-17 *When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been (water) baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*
 - In Acts 19:1–7, Paul found a group of disciples in Ephesus who had not heard that the Holy Spirit had been given. When Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied, just as others had at Pentecost. This again shows that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a distinct and separate experience.
4. The Holy Spirit baptism is the promise of the Father.
 - Luke 24:49 *I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”* (John 14:16, 15:26; Acts 2:38, 5:32)
5. The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is that the believer may have power...
 - To be a witness. (Acts 1:8)
 - In their personal life. (John 16:13-15; Galatians 5:16-17)

- For service. (Luke 4:18-19; John 14:12; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11)
 - For spiritual warfare. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:12; 1 John 4:4)
 - For God-given ability to accomplish God-given tasks.
6. The baptism is a gift as well as a promise of the Lord *for every believer* (Acts 1:4; Ephesians 5:18).
- Acts 2:39 *For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.*
7. Apart from a life filled with the fruit of the Spirit other evidences of the baptism of the Spirit include...
- Speaking in tongues is a gift for everyone. (Acts 2:4, 10:44-46, 19:6) Tongues also strengthens the believer, 1 Corinthians 14:4 *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself..*
 - They also prophesied (Acts 4:31; 19:6)
 - The immersion into the Holy Spirit creates a greater passion for souls, a new power to pray, a deeper love for the Word of God, functioning in spiritual gifts, and a more intimate relationship with Christ!

IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

Examples of the Disciples and the early Church as they were empowered by the Holy Spirit in signs, wonders and the proclamation of the Gospel. In a few words state the event which took place in the following verses:

1. Acts 4:5-14
2. Acts 4:23-31
3. Acts 5:1-11
4. Acts 8:4-8
5. Acts 9:10-16
6. Acts 10:9-48
7. Acts 13:1-3

THE PURPOSE OF TONGUES, OUR HEAVENLY LANGUAGE

(That) the believer may have every reason to expect His incoming to be after the same manner as that in which He came upon Jew and Gentile alike in Bible days and as recorded in the Word, that it

may be truly said of us as of the house of Cornelius: the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning. — Aimee Semple McPherson (Founder, Foursquare)

1 Corinthians 14:1-3 *If you praise Him in the private language of tongues, God understands you but no one else does, for you are sharing intimacies just between you and Him. (Message Bible)*

1. The prophecy of “tongues” by Isaiah, calling it a rest for the weary and a refreshing.
 - Isaiah 28:11-12 *...with foreign lips and strange tongues God will speak to this people, to whom he said, “This is the resting place,...” and, “This is the place of repose...”*
2. The promise of Jesus Christ that those who believe would speak with new tongues, a language that has never been spoken before or one the speaker does not understand.
 - Mark 16:17 *And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;...*
3. The fulfillment of this prophecy and promise came at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Tongues is one of the evidences of the baptism or infilling of the Holy Spirit. Here are a few examples...
 - During Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-4)
 - Falling on Gentiles. (Acts 10:44-46)
 - Disciples who had accepted salvation in Christ but were not filled with the Spirit. (Acts 19:5-7)
4. Benefits through the exercise of tongues.
 - Personal strength. (1 Corinthians 14:4; Jude 20)
 - Worship and communication with God. (1 Corinthians 14:15)
 - Holy Spirit interceding (praying) through us. (Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 14:14; Ephesians 6:18)
5. The public ministry of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14.
 - Public tongues, unless it is a congregational time of worship expressed in tongues, must be interpreted to be understood. (1 Corinthians 14:5, 28)
 - Tongues and interpretation must be judged by the leaders. (1 Corinthians 14:29)
 - The “Spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophet.” Chaos is never from God in a public service and the those who prophesy must be submitted to the prophets of the church. (1 Corinthians 14:32-33, 39-40)
6. How do we receive it? **ASK**, Luke 11:13. When do we use it? **ALL THE TIME!** 1 Corinthians 14:18 *“I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all...”*

Prayer: *Father, thank You for saving me and giving me new life. I believe the Holy Spirit is Your gift, and I desire all You have for me. Baptize me in Your Spirit and fill me with Your presence and power. I surrender and receive it by faith.*

NEXT WEEK: The Spirit-Filled Foundation of the Church | ACTS 1-2

THE BOOK *of* ACTS



SECTION 2

THE SPIRIT-FILLED FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH | ACTS 1-2

From obedient prayer to the powerful birth of the Church

1. The promise of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:1-11)
 - Jesus teaches the disciples for _____ days after His resurrection. He commands them to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Father, the Holy Spirit.
 - Acts 1:5 *You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now...*
2. The Disciples misunderstanding. (1:6-7)
 - The disciples' ask if Jesus will _____ the kingdom to Israel.
 - Jesus redirects their focus to the spiritual, not "political" foundation of the Kingdom.
3. The purpose of the coming baptism in/of the Holy Spirit. (1:8)
 - Acts 1:8 *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...*
 - **Key:** Power is given to be His witnesses in Jerusalem (Riverside), Judea (the Inland Empire), Samaria (Nations within a nation: Pueblo Native Tribes), and the ends of the earth (China and India).
4. Christ visibly ascends into Heaven as two angels announce His return. (1:9-11)
 - Acts 1:0-11 *...They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."*
 - Explain what the angels meant.
5. In obedience to Christ's words the disciples return to the room in unity and expectant prayer. (1:12-26)
 - Peter leads in selecting a replacement for Judas... Matthias.
 - Unity, expectancy, and continual prayer preceded the outpouring.

6. The outpouring of the promised Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:1–13)
 - The Spirit falls _____ with wind and tongues of fire on each person in attendance. These were symbols of God’s presence, power and purification. (Read Exodus 19:18; 1 Kings 18:38; Daniel 3:24-25; Hebrews 12:29)
 - All are filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in other tongues.
 - This fulfills John the Baptist’s prophecy of the baptism in the Spirit in Luke 3:16 *John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come,... He will baptize you with (in) the Holy Spirit and fire.*

7. Jews from _____ hear the gospel in their own languages. (2:5–13)
 - The Spirit empowers cross-cultural witness from the very beginning. People from many nations were in Jerusalem during the Passover
 - **Passover** included the feasts of Passover and unleavened bread, symbolizing Israel’s hasty deliverance from Egypt, culminating with the feast of Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks, celebrating the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai 50 days later. Scan the code to see the actual location of Mt. Sinai. 
 - Some were amazed and curious, others mocked. The Spirit’s work *always* invites both wonder and controversy. One example is The Azusa Street revival in 1906 in downtown Los Angeles. In spite of its controversy, it spawned the modern-day Pentecostal Movement that has encircled the globe! Scan the code to view a short history of this revival. 

8. Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Spirit. (Acts 2:14–36)
 - Peter boldly declares that this is the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy in Joel 2:28-29
 - The Spirit has now fallen on all flesh, sons, daughters, young, old!

9. Peter declares Jesus both Lord and Messiah in 2:22–41 and the people’s response!
 - Peter proclaims the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus.
 - Jesus has given/poured out what they now see and hear, the mighty Holy Spirit.

10. The Church is birthed in great Holy Spirit power! (Acts 2:37–47)
 - As a result of Peter’s message, the people are struck with a life-changing spirit of repentance, they were cut to the heart ask what they must do! Peter responds by telling them to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit, **and 3,000 were saved!!**
 - Acts 2:37-41 *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”...***

11. The Spirit-filled community (2:42–47) The early Church devotes itself to:
 - The teaching of the Apostles.
 - Fellowship (koinonia) _____

- The breaking of bread _____
- Prayer _____ (Ephesians 6:18)
- Miracles, generosity, unity, and favor from God *and* from man.
- The Lord continued to add to their number daily those who were being saved!

12. Read the addendum: The Matthew 16 Church

Discussion

- Give examples of “cross cultural” connections during the ministry life of Jesus in the Gospels.
- Do you believe that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit began as a “cross cultural” event? Explain why.
- Do you believe that some Christians tend to be “professional tarriers” and spend a lot of their time and energy enjoying their personal relationship to God while not moving out and sharing God’s love with others?
- Describe in your own words the difference to being filled with the Spirit and the baptism of/in the Holy Spirit.
- By looking at the four different types of tongues, do you think everyone should speak in tongues?

Private tongues 1 Corinthians 14:2 (Message Bible) *...If you praise him in the private language of tongues, God understands you but no one else does, for you are sharing intimacies just between you and him.*

Public tongues must be interpreted. (1 Corinthians 14:5, 27)

Tongues as a sign for unbelievers in known human languages. (Acts 2; 1 Corinthians 14:20-25).

Intercessory tongues occurs when the Spirit prays *through us* beyond our understanding. (Romans 8:26)

Answers: 40, restore, suddenly, every nation, a Holy Spirit generosity, eating together, all types of prayer

NEXT WEEK: Rooted and alive with the Spirit | ACTS 2:42-47

THE BOOK *of* ACTS

PART 3

ROOTED AND ALIVE WITH THE SPIRIT | ACTS 2:42–47

A Church devoted to God's Word, fellowship, and to prayer.

(Acts 2:42-47) They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer... And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

1. The believers were committed to the teaching of the Apostles.

- They were continually committed to learning from those who had walked with Jesus.

The Greek: To be earnest towards, to persevere in, be constantly diligent, attend to all the exercises. Hebrews 6:11–12 *We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.*

- The people were hungry for truth that _____.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*

Romans 12:2 *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

2 Corinthians 3:18 *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

- The Word of God became their foundation and compass for life!

Question: How do we renew our mind? What would you do if you found yourself too busy to read and meditate on God's Word?

2. There was deep fellowship (*koinonia*) with one another.

- **The Greek:** A close association involving mutual interests and _____. It was a partnership, more than just spending time together, they shared life.
- This was a Spirit-bonded unity that expressed love, care, and mutual support for each other!
- They truly lived as a _____.

3. **They ate together and broke bread.**

- This likely refers both to regular meals shared in love and to sharing the communion, remembering Jesus' sacrifice.
- Christ remained central in every area of life, especially as they met from house to house, sharing fellowship over meals which were designed for more than nourishment... they were a place of worship and growth.

4. **There was persistent, powerful prayer.**

- Prayer was not a legalistic routine but a lifeline, a dynamic interaction with God.
- They prayed together often, relying on the Spirit's leading, interceding for one another, and seeking God's will.
- Scan the code to view extensive notes on the Disciples' Prayer Pattern given by Jesus, the Master of prayer!



(2:43) Everyone was filled with awe (the fear of the Lord) at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.

5. **There was a climate of awe and reverence, _____!**

- A few Scriptures on the fear of the LORD: Proverbs 1:7, 8:13, 14:26, 34:7; Ecclesiastes 12:13
- The presence of God among them caused a holy fear—a deep respect and awareness that God was truly among them.
- Psalm 89:7 *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him. **And because of that, the Spirit's presence was tangible and undeniable.***
- Scan the code and watch John Bevere on "The Fear of God."



6. **And because there was a climate of HOLY FEAR, God performed miracles and wonders.**

- Healing, deliverance, and supernatural acts flowed through the apostles by the Spirit's power. These were not for show, but for confirmation! They validated the gospel and drew attention to the Living Christ.

(44–45) All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.

7. **They were a united body of believers.**

- The believers were not just associated with each other under a common belief system, **they were one in heart and spirit.**
- Everything they had was seen as God's.

8. **They were willing to sacrifice for others.**

- They voluntarily sold their possessions to help the poor and needy.
- Their giving was Spirit-led and driven by compassion: agape love in action!

(46) Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.

9. The early Church was not content with once-a-week meetings. They gathered daily, both publicly in the temple and privately in homes.

- “Church” was not an event, it was a way of life. It was true revival!
- Their hearts were full of gladness and authenticity, no masks, no pretense. Their love for one another made every day sacred

(2:47) (They were) praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

11. The believers lived out a lifestyle of praise!

- Worship wasn’t confined to songs alone, it permeated every part of life. Their continual praise created an atmosphere of God’s presence.
- The Tabernacle of David had continuous worship. Levites were appointed by rotation day and night to minister to the Lord. Psalm 134:1 *Praise the Lord, all you servants of the Lord who minister by night in the house of the Lord.*

12. They had favor with God and in the community (Jerusalem).

- Their authenticity and love earned them respect and goodwill from those outside the Church.
- The fruit of the Spirit in their lives spoke louder than words. (Galatians 5:22-23)

13. God produced the growth!

- Evangelism was not forced! It was _____ a guilt riddled, legalistic activity. They truly had been touched and transformed and sharing the Gospel flowed naturally out of their lives.
- **Therefore, the Lord Himself** added new believers every day.

14. Characteristics of a Spirit filled church (Acts 2:42–47)

- Rooted in Scripture by Spirit led teaching.
- Authentic fellowship and unity in Christ, expressed through Spirit-led hospitality.
- Persistent and powerful prayer... public and private!
- Genuine fear of the Lord resulting in miracles.
- Joyful gatherings with sincere hearts brought growth and a continual harvest of souls.

Answers: transforms, sharing, family in Christ, the fear of the Lord, not

NEXT WEEK: Purity and Power | ACTS 3-5

THE BOOK *of* ACTS

PART 4

PURITY AND POWER | ACTS 3-5

Power that multiplies through healing, persecution, and Holy Spirit boldness.

The miraculous healing at Jerusalem's gate... a miracle becomes a message. (Acts 3:1–26)

1. Healing at the Beautiful Gate. (3:1–10)

- Peter and John encounter a lame man begging at the temple gate and Peter declares: *“Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”* The man leaps up, walks, and praises God, causing a great stir among the crowd.
- Peter seizes the moment to preach Christ—not the miracle itself, but faith in Jesus as the true power. Peter emphasizes that Jesus is the fulfillment of prophecy, the suffering servant, and the author of life whom God raised. *“Repent...that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”*

2. Persecution _____ great courage. (Acts 4:1–31)

- Pressure does not crush the true Church, it purifies and propels it to bolder faith.

3. Arrest and intimidation. (4:1–12)

- Religious leaders are distressed by the apostles' preaching.
- Peter boldly declares Jesus is the only name under heaven by which we must be saved (v.12). Their boldness amazes the council, and they recognize these men had been with Jesus!

4. The command to be silent. (4:13–22)

- The leaders threaten them and command them not to speak in Jesus' name. Peter and John respond with unshakable conviction: *“We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”*

5. A unified prayer for boldness. (4:23–31)

- The believers pray, not for safety, but for boldness to speak the Word. *After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.* (34)

In the midst of generosity, hypocrisy is exposed and _____. (Acts 4:32–5:16)

6. **Spirit-led generosity.** (4:32–37)

- Believers continue to share everything; no one is in need.
- Joseph, named Barnabas, sells a field and gives the money as an act of sincere generosity.

7. **God confronts corruption and deceit in Ananias and Sapphira.** (5:1–11)

- They lie to the Holy Spirit, pretending to give all while keeping back part.
- God’s judgment is swift to preserve the purity of His presence.
- Great fear seizes the Church. God is never mocked. Galatians 6:7 *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*

8. **Miraculous power and growth.** (5:12–16)

- Signs and wonders increase and even Peter’s shadow brings healing.
- The people hold the Church in high regard, and many are added to the Lord.
- **Scan the code to read Charles Spurgeon’s prayer for revival.**
- **Questions:** Do you think God’s judgment on Ananias and Sapphira was too harsh? Explain your reasoning. What was the result of this judgment?



When the enemy tries to silence the Church, the Holy Spirit raises the volume. (Acts 5:17–42)

9. **The apostles are imprisoned and released.** (5:17–21)

- Jealous religious leaders imprison the apostles.
- An angel of the Lord sets them free and commands: *“Go, stand and tell the people all about this new life.”*

10. **Confrontation and courage.** (5:22–32)

- They are arrested again and accused of defying orders.
- Peter responds with uncompromising boldness: *“We must obey God rather than men.”*
- He preaches Jesus—raised, exalted, and offering repentance and forgiveness.

11. **Wise counsel from Gamaliel.** (5:33–40)

- A respected Pharisee (under whom the apostle Paul was trained earlier) warns: If this is of man, it will fail. But if it is of God, you cannot stop it.
- The apostles are beaten and released with further threats.

12. **Everyone rejoices in _____.** (5:41–42)

- They rejoice to be counted worthy of suffering for the Name!!
- And they never stop teaching and proclaiming Jesus, every day, in homes and in public.

Miracles point to the Gospel, not themselves, and persecution strengthens Spirit-filled believers. As the Holy Spirit confronted sin, there was joy in suffering for Christ.

Answers: ignites, judged, suffering

NEXT WEEK: The crisis that became a catalyst for growth | ACTS 6-8:1

THE BOOK *of* ACTS

PART 5

CRISIS, GROWTH, AND PERSECUTION | ACTS 6-8:1

Church growth and the great turning point for the newly born Church

Acts 6–8:1 reveals how the early Church dealt with: _____

1. **Acts 6:1–7** | (3-4) *Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word...*

- Rapid church growth created logistical challenges leading to the delegation of tasks and the rise of new leaders.
- A conflict arose when the Hellenists, Greek speaking widows, were overlooked in daily food distribution, revealing a need for better care and organization. The apostles gathered the believers and selected seven Spirit-filled men filled with God's wisdom to oversee the work, allowing the apostles to focus on prayer and teaching. This was a key moment of structural adjustment to ensure practical needs were met without compromising spiritual priorities.

Note: All seven men listed in Acts 6:5 have Greek names, suggesting they were Hellenists. This was fitting because the complaint originated from the Hellenistic community.

- Verse 7 *So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*

2. **Acts 6:8–15** | (6-8) *Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)... who began to argue with Stephen. But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.*

- Stephen performed signs and wonders, drawing opposition from the Synagogue of the Freedmen. Unable to match his wisdom from the Spirit, they accuse him of blasphemy. He is seized and brought before the Sanhedrin, where false witnesses claim he spoke against the temple and the Law. (15) *All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.*

Note: The Synagogue of the Freedmen in Acts 6:9 refers to a group of Jewish freedmen (former slaves) or their descendants who had formed their own synagogue in Jerusalem.

3. **Acts 7:1–53** | (51) *You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit!*

- Stephen delivers a powerful and detailed account, tracing God’s work through Israel’s history from Abraham, Joseph, and Moses to the building of the temple. He focuses on how the Jewish people consistently resisted God’s purposes and persecuted His prophets.
 - He concludes by accusing the Sanhedrin of being stiff-necked and betrayers and murderers of the Righteous One (Jesus). This prophetic confrontation echoes the ministry of the Old Testament prophets.
4. **Acts 7:54–60** | (54–56) *When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”*
- When the members of the Sanhedrin heard Stephen’s words, they were enraged and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He declared, “Look, I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:54–56). This vision of Christ in glory further infuriated the council.
 - They rushed at him, dragged him out of the city, and stoned him to death. As the stones struck him, Stephen prayed, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them,” echoing the mercy and forgiveness of Jesus on the cross. With that, he became the first Christian martyr, dying with his eyes fixed on Christ.
5. **Acts 8:1** | (1a) *And Saul approved of their killing him.*
- Saul doesn’t just watch Stephen die... **he actively approves!** His appearance at Stephen’s stoning is the first mention of a man who will soon become the Apostle Paul, the most influential missionary and theologian of the early Church (Acts 13-28; and the Book of Romans). His approval of Stephen’s execution shows just how radically his life will change after his encounter with Christ. It sets the stage for the dramatic conversion and transformation in Acts 9.
 - Stephen’s death is a major turning point in the early Church! His incredibly bold witness and resulting martyrdom ignites a wave of persecution that forces many believers to flee Jerusalem. This scattering, called the (Christian) diaspora, was driven by fierce opposition, and becomes the very means by which the gospel spreads beyond the city into Judea and Samaria, **just as Jesus had commanded in Acts 1:8**. What seemed like a crisis becomes a MAJOR catalyst. God used the persecution not to silence the Church, but to expand and thrust the Church into its global mission.
- Acts 1:8** *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

Answers: internal tensions | Spirit led leadership | external persecution

NEXT WEEK: Growth beyond the walls | ACTS 8-11

THE BOOK *of* ACTS

PART 6

MOVEMENT BEYOND THE WALLS | ACTS 8-11

The scattered believers expand the Church to “the uttermost” by the Spirit.

Acts 8 | The Gospel breaks out of Jerusalem

Persecution leads to the expansion of the Church.

1. Persecution after Stephen’s death. (1-3)
 - Saul begins persecuting the Church and approves of Stephen’s martyrdom.
 - Believers scatter (the “Diaspora”) but continue preaching the Gospel.
2. Philip’s ministry in Samaria. (4-25)
 - He proclaims Christ, many Samaritans who were demon possessed, paralyzed and sick are delivered and healed!
 - Peter and John confirm the work in Samaria. They lay hands on the new believers and prayed and they, too, received the Holy Spirit!
 - Simon the Sorcerer believes but tries to buy the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter rebukes him, emphasizing that God’s gift cannot be bought.
3. Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (26-40)
 - Philip is led by the Spirit to an Ethiopian official and explains _____
The eunuch believes and is baptized!
 - Philip was “transported” supernaturally by the Holy Spirit. He disappears and reappears in Azotus (Ashdod), about 20–30 miles to the north.
 - The Eunuch continues home rejoicing! This was a key step in the Gospel reaching Africa.
 - See addendum, “Learn to be a Spirit-Led Witness.”

Acts 9 | Saul’s conversion: From persecutor of the Church to Apostle to the Gentiles

Jesus transforms His enemies into His servants.

1. Saul’s dramatic conversion (1–19)
 - On the road to Damascus, Saul encounters the risen Jesus. Temporarily blinded, he is led to Damascus.

- In his fear, Ananias obeys God's call to pray for Saul, who receives sight and is baptized in the Holy Spirit. Notice Saul's purpose and calling in Acts 9:15-16.
2. Saul's early ministry (20–31)
 - Saul preached Jesus as the Son of God and faced _____ from the Jews and is forced to flee for his life.
 - The Church grows and experiences a season of peace.
 3. Peter's miracles in Lydda and Joppa (32–43)
 - Peter heals Aeneas (a paralyzed man) in Lydda. Everyone turns to the Lord!
 - Peter silences the mourners and raises Dorcas (Tabitha) from the dead in Joppa. Again, many turn to the Lord!

Acts 10 | The Gospel opens to the Gentiles

God shows no partiality, salvation is for all nations.

1. Cornelius's Vision (1–8)
 - Cornelius, a Roman centurion and God-fearing man, receives a visit from an angel and tells him to send for Peter.
2. Peter's vision and his ministry to Cornelius' household. (9–48)
 - Three times Peter sees a vision of a sheet with unclean animals and through these visions, God declares all foods and people clean, challenging Jewish exclusivity.
 - Peter enters Cornelius's home (against Jewish custom), preaches the Gospel, and testifies that God accepts all who fear Him and do what is right.
 - The Holy Spirit falls on the Gentiles, showing God's absolute _____. Peter baptizes them, marking a turning point: Gentiles receive the Gospel without becoming Jews first!

Acts 11 | Salvation is for all people, Jews and Gentiles alike.

The early Christian church grew and embraced non-Jewish, Gentile believers.

1. Peter defends his actions (1–18)
 - Peter returns to Jerusalem following his powerful encounter with the Gentiles in Acts 10, where his preaching led to an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
 - Some of the Jewish believers criticize him for associating with Gentiles. Peter explains the vision he received (a sheet with unclean animals) and how the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles just as it did on the Jews at Pentecost.
 - After hearing Peter's explanation, the Jewish believers glorify God and gladly acknowledge that repentance and life have also been granted to the Gentiles.

Important note: The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius and the Gentiles marked a GREAT turning point! For the first time, God made it clear that salvation isn't only for Jews or Law-keepers. Cornelius, an outsider and a Gentile Roman Centurion, received the Spirit *just like everyone did at Pentecost*. Faith in Jesus, not ethnicity or ritual, defines God's people and ancient Jewish barriers of exclusivity were demolished as Gentiles received salvation and the Spirit. (Jonah 4:1–2)

The Gospel is for all, and the mission is _____!

2. The Church in Antioch grows (19–26)

- After Stephen's martyrdom, believers are scattered and preached mostly to Jews.
- In Antioch, some believers began preaching to Gentiles as well, and many turned to the Lord.
- The Jerusalem church sends Barnabas to the believers in Antioch. Barnabas rejoices and encourages them to remain faithful.
- Barnabas brings Saul (Paul) from Tarsus to help, and they minister in Antioch for a year.
- Antioch becomes a major center of Christianity as well as a _____. It is here that the disciples were first called "Christians."

3. Relief is sent to Judea (Verses 27–30)

- Prophets came to Antioch, and one of them, Agabus, prophesied of a great coming famine. In the New Testament, prophets were Spirit-empowered believers who declared God's message, often including future events. Agabus's prophecy, later fulfilled around AD 45–46, was not just a warning, it stirred the Church to compassionate action.
- Although being young and culturally diverse, the Antioch church responded with tremendous generosity in support for believers in Judea. This was the first recorded act of financial aid between churches, setting a precedent for Christian aid. Barnabas and Saul were entrusted with delivering the relief, a sign of the growing trust in their leadership.

Answers: Isaiah 53:7-8 | fierce opposition | acceptance | global | sending church

THE ANTIOCH MODEL: SPIRIT-LED SENDING | ACTS 13

THE BOOK *of* ACTS

PART 7

THE ANTIOCH MODEL: SPIRIT-LED SENDING | ACTS 13

Sent to the nations. Acts 1:8 fulfilled!

Acts 13:1-3 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

1. Prophetic leadership and global impact.
2. The Church in Antioch sends out the first missionaries.
3. Acts 13 marks the beginning of Paul's three missionary journeys and the outward expansion of the gospel to the Gentile world.



- [Acts 1-13 Overview](#)
- [Memory Verses](#)
- [Spurgeon's Prayer for Revival](#)
- [The Fear of the LORD](#) (John Bevere)
- [Being a Spirit-Led Witness](#) (Acts 8:26-40)
- [View CLC's Missions Page](#)