

Important Reminders

How to Study Acts & Leader Guides

If you have group members who need help studying Acts, direct them to the Fall 2019 page on our website under Small Groups. Here you can access four different Bible study methods along with examples for how to use the Acts study journal. This is also the place where you can find the Leader Guide for each week.

Theology in Acts

Just as authenticity is critical in small groups, it's also a core theme throughout the book of Acts. As the gospel spread from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth, God worked in supernatural ways to *authenticate* the message of the gospel and the messengers who advanced the gospel. The gospel is authentic. The gospel is real—it can be trusted to be reliable and true.

As the gospel spread from Jerusalem to the Gentiles, the gospel advanced from a monotheistic culture (one God) to a polytheistic culture (many gods). The miraculous signs we see through Acts are simply intended to prove the authenticity of the gospel. During a time of traveling preachers and pagan philosophers, the miracles performed by the Apostle Paul were done to prove his message and reveal the authenticity of the gospel.

Specifically, in the city of Ephesus in Acts 19, which was known to be a stronghold of demonic activity, God matches the supernatural forces with the manifestation of the Holy Spirit as a visible demonstration to validate and authenticate the gospel.

Because the book of Acts is a unique and transitional time in redemptive history, it's important to read Acts as descriptive not prescriptive. *Descriptive* means we should read Acts as narrative. Acts is not prescribing what we should do today, it is rather describing what happened during this time period as the gospel turned the world inside out and upside down through the powerful witness of men and women who lived out their faith and shared the life-changing message of Jesus.

Leader Guide

Acts 19

Preview Acts 19

Earlier Paul was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to share the gospel in Asia (16:6) but now the gospel is spreading throughout Asia. For two years "all the residents of Asia" heard the word of the Lord (19:10). Starting with a small group of 12 men who were filled with the Spirit, the entire city of Ephesus was transformed.

Discuss Acts 19

When Paul came to Ephesus, he found 12 men who were disciples of John the Baptist and did not know Jesus. These men believed in God but had not heard about the Holy Spirit. *How have you grown in your knowledge, awareness and dependence on the Holy Spirit? How has Acts challenged you?*

Imagine how the gospel has the potential to transform the societal norms of our culture? Think specifically about the town you live in or your workplace. *How would you like to see the power of the gospel transform and change this place?*

Transformed lives transform lives. *Who is someone in your life who has come alongside you as an example of what it looks like to follow Christ? How did this person transform your life?*

In Acts, how is God authenticating the message of the gospel and the messengers like Paul through miraculous signs? How has God authenticated and made himself real or evident in your life?

Apply Acts 19

As the believers in Ephesus were transformed by the gospel, they grew in conviction and confessed their old way of life. Transformation is not holding onto sinful habits and attitudes of the past. You are a new person and have a new identity in Christ with new values, priorities and convictions.

What is something you are holding onto and how do you need the help of the Holy Spirit to transform your life?