



What to Know

WE ARE
JUMPING BACK INTO
THE BOOK OF ACTS

THIS IS A
FOUR WEEK SERIES

THE BOOK OF ACTS
CHRONICLES THE
EARLY YEARS OF THE
CHURCH AND IS
RECORDED BY LUKE,
THE PHYSICIAN.

THE "MOODY BIBLE
COMMENTARY" COVERS
THIS SERIES ON PAGES
1682-1689

WEEK 1 - ACTS 4:32-5:11
WEEK 2 - ACTS 5:12-42
WEEK 3 - ACTS 5:17:42*
WEEK 4 - UPDATE SOON

*CHANGE FROM ORIGINAL PLAN

What to Do

I hope you know that I desire each individual Life Group to operate as a unique family unit. A Life Group is made up of individuals that contribute to the overall health and function of the group. But no two Life Groups will look the same, just like no two families will look the same.

Because of this, one group may be in a season where deep Bible study is desired and easily achievable. While another group may be in a season where the most you can do is check in on one another and briefly pray because of the busyness of life.

The goal of Life Groups is to help each other learn to live the life that God through Christ has called us to. As with nature, our lives have seasons in which growth, rest, or even death is a natural part of the season. If we are trying to plant flowers in the dead of winter, we will be angry and frustrated because they won't bloom. Knowing what season you're in will help you as you plan and meet each week as a group.

For the rest of this semester, I want us to work hard at meeting our group members where they are, finding out what season they are in so that our group life reflects what they need the most. This document is only a guide, something to help you lead, not tell you everything.

Persecution

Acts 5:17-42

The preaching schedule was adjusted, allowing us to spend more time with a portion of last week's passage. Please use this week's discussion guide to cover Acts 5:17-42.

Opening Questions:

What do you know about early Christian persecution? Please describe what you know.

Are there Christians being persecuted today? If yes, what do you know about their story?

Have you experienced persecution in your life? If so, please share what you feel comfortable with.

Read: Acts 5:17-42. *You may also consider reading this passage from multiple translations.*

Discuss: Gerald Sittser writes in his book, *"Water from a Deep Well,"* that "History can be a valuable resource for us, especially in the spiritual life, for it provides examples of how believers who lived in other times and places understood what it means to seek, know and experience God, which captures the essential meaning of 'spirituality.'"

Why is it important for us to know the story of the early Church?

Furthermore, why is it important to know and understand the persecution that took place for the apostles and early martyrs?

Based on your reading of this section of Scripture, why was the Sanhedrin upset with the apostles? Where did you find your answer (*cite Bible verse*)? How did the events taking place in this chapter pave the way for greater violence and persecution toward Christians? How do you know this?

Sittser, again in his book *"Water from a Deep Well,"* states "*Considering the story line of the New Testament, the martyrdom of Christians during the early Christian period should not come as a complete surprise to us. Persecution, suffering and death are at the heart of the Christian message. The cross, an instrument of gruesome execution, became by A.D. 500 the primary symbol of the faith because it reminded believers then, as it does to this day, of Jesus' ignominious sacrifice on the cross. The New Testament recounts story after story of persecution and suffering, not only in the Gospel accounts, which narrate the story of Jesus' life, but also in the book of Acts, which tells the story of the early church.*"

Why would the apostles be bold in telling of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus? What difference does it make for the apostles to declare openly about Jesus' resurrection versus speaking privately about it?

Where do you publicly and openly speak about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus? Share what it was like the last time you shared the gospel. If you haven't shared in a long time, or you have never shared the gospel, what might you need in order to boldly and unashamedly share the gospel? How can this group share the gospel?

Peter's response in verse 29 is "We must obey God rather than men." Why was his response to the Sanhedrin so bold? What factors contributed to Peter's boldness in his response (*answers may include the Holy Spirit and his experience with Jesus*)?

Would others consider you bold for the name of Christ? Why or why not? What might you need to do or experience to become more open about sharing the gospel despite persecution or being uncomfortable?

Is there anything else in this passage that stands out to you?

Close by praying for persecuted Christians.