

## KEY VERSE

"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 1:8



# AWAKEN

## PRAYER GUIDE



### THE BOOK OF ACTS: A COMPANION GUIDE TO AWAKEN PRAYER AND FASTING

Every February, Cross Point Church enters into an intentional time of prayer and fasting known as "Awaken." Awaken was born out of a consistent prayer the Lord placed on our hearts to see "renewal in the church, revival in the city and awakening across Middle Tennessee". As we seek God during this time, the book of Acts is going to be our prayer and mission guide.

Our hope throughout this study is that the Lord will begin to connect the dots for you regarding the relationship between prayer, being led by the Holy Spirit and the mission of the church. The heart behind Awaken as a whole is to increase dependence on the Holy Spirit, so that we might join Him all the more in the redemptive work He is doing throughout Middle Tennessee and among the nations! The book of Acts will force us to confront the motivation of all our activities that we give ourselves to and whose "power" we do them in.

The key verse (see on the left) functions like a table of contents for the book of Acts (see below) and is important to keep in mind as we dive into prayer and fasting as it relates to the mission of God. If we detach the Spirit, prayer and mission from one another, we've departed from all that God intended to reveal to us about Himself through the historical events detailed in this book.

The mission of God is displayed in the chapters of Acts as follows:

**ACTS 1-7**  
JERUSALEM

**ACTS 8-12**  
JUDEA & SAMARIA

**ACTS 13-28**  
ENDS OF THE EARTH

# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

## READING AND PRAYER GUIDE

*This is a 31-day reading and prayer guide about the book of Acts.*

- **Use this in tandem with the [Fasting Guide](#) that will help you decide on a fast to do as you complete this guide.**
- **Before you begin and when you conclude**
  - Prep Day 1 & 2: Begin two days before the start of your 28 days of prayer and fasting.
  - Review Day: A day following your prayer and fasting to reflect on the month.
- **Reading and prayer**
  - Each day has one chapter of Scripture and some prayer prompts that flow from that day's reading.
  - Praying through Scripture is simply praying God's word back to Him. Feel free to pray in your own words, think about the text and let prayers flow from that. Don't overthink it. Let the Scriptures serve as your launching pad for your prayers each day.
  - If you get behind in the reading, or want to sit in one chapter longer than another, don't worry. Take liberty to follow the Spirit's leading as you encounter Him through these Scriptures. Nobody's Perfect – use this guide as a tool to get closer to Jesus, not a barrier.

## • For Parents/Adults with kids in their lives

- We have included some talking points, activities and prayers for you to use to have conversations with your children or children in your life, so that you can involve them in this time of Awaken.
- Other helpful resources for kids we recommend: The Jesus Storybook Bible or the Adventure Bible

## • Weekly Devotional Content

- There is one devotional at the start of each week, that you will read in addition to the first day of that week, to help prepare your heart for what you will read in Scripture.
- As you prayerfully read these devotionals, let them situate you in the greater narrative of Scripture that you read in Acts. Imagine yourself walking with the Apostles in the streets of Jerusalem, listening to Stephen's sermon live, praying for Peter's release from jail, praying with Lydia and hearing the Gospel, being in the crowd in Ephesus and being shipwrecked with Paul on the island of Malta.

## BOOKMARK

At your Cross Point campus, you can pick up a bookmark or [download one here](#) with five blanks for you to write the names of people in your life who are close to you, but far from God. Stick this bookmark in your Bible, and when you see it, simply take a moment to pray for each of those people by name throughout the month.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A great place to start before reading, and to reference back to periodically, are these two overview videos of the Book of Acts ([Part 1](#); [Part 2](#)) that our friends over at the Bible Project have put together.



## PREP DAY 1: WHO WROTE ACTS?

**READ:** Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-5

**How far would you go so that one friend might experience the saving love of Jesus?** Would you cross an ocean? Put a career or the possibility of a family on hold? Would you endanger yourself? Would you join up with people that the government had suspicions about? Would you sleep on couches and floors? How far would you go so that one friend might experience the saving love of Jesus?

The answers to those questions above help us understand how both the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts came to be. Before launching into any book, it's important to know who wrote it and their intended purpose. The author of these two writings is widely known to be the same person: a doctor named Luke. Luke is considered to be the only non-Jewish author of the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> It appears that Luke wrote both his Gospel and Acts to one man, one friend: a man named Theophilus, whose name means "lover of God."<sup>2</sup> Regardless of who Theophilus actually was, there seems to be an emphasis on the cost of following Christ in both of Luke's volumes. Theophilus is wrestling with the cost, thus Luke's intentions are clear: "so that you may *know* the certainty of the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:4).

What then do we learn about Luke from Scripture that helps us understand the Book of Acts and its role in the Bible and in our lives? There are, at least, four things we can glean from the life of Luke that aid us as we read through this historical account.

1. **Luke is a careful historian.** Training for medicine was a rigorous practice then as it is now. This education was leveraged as he wrote Luke-Acts. Luke doesn't rely on one source of information for his writings, he takes in ancient texts, eyewitness accounts, oral traditions, and personal experience to put together a comprehensive retelling of Jesus and the early church. This level of detail was important as his aim was to help Theophilus and subsequent readers "be certain of the things they had been taught" (as mentioned above) about Jesus and the faith.
2. **Luke is a Gentile.** In the Book of Acts, there is a noticeable shift in how Luke describes Paul and his traveling companions. Before Acts 16:11, Luke refers to them as "they" but starting in Macedonia, Luke shifts the language to "we." This tells us that somewhere along the journey (perhaps Philippi), Luke had responded to the Gospel mission to the Gentiles and had joined them on the journey. His perspective is critical because for Theophilus and the early church,

Luke-Acts appeals to the non-Jewish people who are drawn to Jesus through the message of the Gospel.

3. **Luke is compassionate.** As a doctor, Luke would have been exposed to physical, emotional, financial, sociological and spiritual ailments in all kinds of people. One can assume he was drawn to the redemptive work of Christ and His disciples due to the abundance of stories he includes regarding these things. From the sinful woman of Luke 7, the bleeding woman in Luke 8, the Good Samaritan in Luke 10, the lame man in Acts 3 and the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8, Luke's retelling of these stories reveals a deep compassion for those who suffer.
4. **Luke is a loyal friend and co-laborer.** As mentioned above, Luke joins Paul and the others in the missionary journeys. It's safe to assume it would have been good to have a doctor on hand as Paul never knew what each city would hold for him and his companions, other than suffering (Acts 20:23). Far more than medical assistance only, Luke was a true co-laborer, as his writings reveal. He's passionate about proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus and calling others to a response, no matter what the cost.<sup>3</sup> Because when Paul is in his last days, writing from a Roman jail to Timothy for the last time, he says that while others had deserted him, Luke had not (2 Timothy 4:11).

These highlights collectively contribute to a responsible account of all that Jesus continued to do in and through the Spirit-filled church in the Book of Acts (Acts 1:1). As a Gentile who had and was experiencing the transformation that comes through salvation, he now was joined in the mission of helping others reckon with the claims and work of Jesus as well. Joining the mission of taking the Gospel message to our neighbors and to nations is still the call today to all who have received the salvation that comes through faith in Jesus. Luke's story exemplifies for us that no part of our history is wasted and that recipients of God's grace become the best conduits of it as the mission of God's grace continues to spread throughout the world!

<sup>1</sup> Paul makes this distinction in Colossians ch. 4:11 when he says that there are those "of the circumcision group" who are fellow workers and others who are not. Luke, mentioned in 4:14, is not.

<sup>2</sup> There are many theories as to who Theophilus is. 1. "Theophilus" is a generic title about the kind of person this material would be written for, a lover or friend of God. 2. He was the Jewish high priest named Theophilus ben Ananus who was in office in Jerusalem in AD 37-41. 3. He was a Roman lawyer who defended Paul on his trial in Rome. Thus these two books served as his material to defend Paul and defend Christianity in court. 4. He was a great leader, a wealthy and influential man, in Antioch during the time of Luke who was considering the cost of following Jesus and very well could have helped fund Paul and Luke's journeys. The fourth option seems most plausible.

<sup>3</sup> Including his wealthy, influential friend Theophilus who he is writing all of this for!





## PRAYER POINTS

- Ask God what He wants to accomplish in and through you throughout this fast. In the same way the book of Acts will serve as your guide throughout the month of February, this prayer will also help guide what you're looking for as you pray.
- If you haven't already, ask the Holy Spirit for direction on how to fast. (See our Fasting Guide for examples of how you can partake in this fast).
- Ask The Holy Spirit for a fresh revelation of God's word as you read and pray through the book of Acts.

## PREP DAY 2: THE SETTING

**READ:** Psalm 67

### Historical context

The fifth book of the New Testament is aptly titled "Acts of the Apostles." The word for "Acts" comes from the Greek word "Praxis" which means "doing." This leads us to believe the second volume of Luke's work clues us in on what this volume is about, but chapter one, verse one tells us that this isn't just an account of what the early *followers of Jesus* were doing. In Acts 1:1-2, Luke states, "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen." This nuance lets us know that Luke is setting up that the work *Jesus began* to do in the Gospel of Luke, is now being continued *through* the church, empowered by none other than the same Holy Spirit who empowered every step of Jesus' life and ministry.

The backdrop for the book of Acts is similar to the setting of the Gospels. Rome was now the world superpower, having conquered the Greeks definitively in 146 BC at the Battle of Corinth. By the time of Jesus, Rome had conquered a good portion of the land surrounding the Mediterranean sea, which covers portions of North Africa, South Europe and the Middle East. Since Rome was now the center of the universe, so to speak, Acts shows how the Gospel is "on the move" from Jerusalem to Antioch and on to Rome. God's presence cannot and will not be isolated to one location on Earth!

As Rome's influence and power spread, some unique factors of the Empire presented both opportunities and obstacles for the advancement of the Gospel that Luke details for us in Acts. There are three main factors that helped contribute to the first century being the ripe time for this movement to take root.<sup>4</sup> **First**, there were a significant number of Jews living outside of Jerusalem and the land that God had promised Abraham in Genesis 12,<sup>5</sup> due to the

numerous world powers that had subjugated and exiled them for centuries prior. This "diaspora" had set up synagogues and communities that were often the first door missionaries would knock on to share the Gospel with.<sup>6</sup> **Second**, there was a golden age of political unity, so to speak. This was done so through the Pax Romana (which functioned like an agreement of terms within the Empire where if you keep the general peace and focus on Roman flourishing, no one will harm you) which enabled the construction of trade routes throughout the land. Good oversight and good trade allowed for much travel, and everyday Christians, as they were going, carried the Good News with them everywhere they went. **Third**, the philosophical predecessors in Greek culture created categories in the minds of thoughtful people to bridge the gap between the religions of the land and the claims Christians were about to make. Leveraging ideas from the likes of Plato, Socrates, Aristotle and the Stoics, these new followers of Jesus were able to explain the Scriptures to hearts that were already considering a different way to view the world.<sup>7</sup>

There were obstacles that stood in the way of the early followers as well though. One of the means of keeping the Pax Romana during this time was through a common understanding of religion. Officials were fine if you wanted to practice your beliefs, as long as it was understood you would participate in the civic festivals/sacrifices that promoted unity as well as worship the emperor of Rome. The Romans had a deep interest in having all the subjects of their various lands believe that, although their religion and gods had different names, they were ultimately the same gods and religion that Romans worshiped and practiced. This was a major obstacle because Christians were often misunderstood and viewed suspiciously due to its claims of monotheism and worship of Jesus alone as "Lord."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Justo Gonzalez. The Story of Christianity, Volume 1.

<sup>5</sup> This is a promise that continues to develop throughout the Bible (e.g. Genesis 12:1,7; 15:18; 17:8; 26:3-4;28:13; Joshua 1:4).

<sup>6</sup> Romans 1:16, e.g.

<sup>7</sup> This is not to say the early Christians equated those ideas with Christianity. They simply used them as conversation points to draw listeners out.

<sup>8</sup> Though Christians were of no threat to the Roman military, they were often persecuted, and even killed, for not participating in communal sacrifices or emperor worship. These were serious charges of treason.

Acts covers a 30 year period (roughly 30AD -60AD) and is an incredible testimony to the truth that has resounded throughout history: that God reigns, and though kingdoms rise and kingdoms fall, the Word of the Lord stands forever.

## Biblical context

From a Biblical context, Acts is a narrative of events that took place directly after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. There is so much more going on though; it is a book that is detailing ancient promises and prophecies fulfilled.<sup>9</sup> The Old Testament prophets foresaw a coming Messiah who would bring about all that God had spoken. The following highlights just two:

### 1. The Fruit of the New Covenant.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel foretold a day when the Lord would make a new covenant with His people, write His word on their hearts and replace their hearts of stone with hearts of flesh by placing His Spirit inside them (Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 36:26). These texts are realized at Pentecost in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit is sent to live in the disciples. The Word of God became so near to them, it was personal and relational. Their minds were opened to understand the word. Their hearts, once hardened by sin, were now ones that felt conviction of sin and love for God and others. This was not just for ethnic Jews, but for all people, just like the promise to Abram in Genesis 12 said.

### 2. The Fulfillment of Temple.

From the beginning, the story of God is one where He dwells with a people. In Genesis 2, Eden is depicted as a temple.<sup>10</sup> Temples, throughout history and across different worldviews, have been viewed as places where Heaven and Earth meet. Where “God” or “the gods” and humans share space. The Bible tells us that kind of relationship was meant to fill the Earth. However, it was broken by sin, thus sacred space must now be carved out and fenced for relationship to continue, often through the mediation of priests and sacrifices. God’s pursuing love relocates the original design to, first, a tabernacle (Exodus 40), then a Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 8). Those were only placeholders; the original plan was still in view, where God’s presence, with His people, would fill the Earth and not be subject to one space.<sup>11</sup> Acts 2 is the first fruits of that plan. Where fire would often symbolize God’s presence in the Old Testament,<sup>12</sup> fire shows up in individual tongues above disciples signifying that *they* are now the holy temple of the living God! Not only that, they now have become a kingdom of priests, those who would serve God and others through the proclamation of the Gospel in word, deed and

power to the rest of creation thus living into the original calling of Genesis 1-2.

These are just two aspects of Acts finding its place in the Biblical story. What these themes from Acts teach us is that the kingdom of God is *here, now* in the coming of Jesus and the age of the Church, and at the same time not yet fully here. We still wait for the ultimate realization of all the prophets foretold. Thus, as John Stott highlights,<sup>13</sup> “the kingdom of God is spiritual in its character. It transcends geographical boundaries for the liberation is not from any political entity, but from sin, death and the devil! The kingdom of God is also international in its membership. This was God’s design all along and in Acts finds a different energy, one that flows outward instead of pulling others inward. Acts also teaches us that the kingdom of God is gradual in its expansion. The call to faithfulness and service unto others to proclaim and live the Gospel is the scope of the mission’s church.”

The sending of the Holy Spirit is the down payment of all that is to come. For He is the one who seals Jesus’ followers and empowers them to live in light of those “great and precious promises” (2 Peter 1:4). The Book of Acts shows then is a powerful account that still trains disciples today to live into the mission of God through the power of the Spirit!

<sup>9</sup> The Old Testament is, in essence, a collection of writings written over the course of approximately 1100 years. This collection stands on its own in a sense that it tells a unified story and ends with a look forward to its fulfillment. At the end of 2 Chronicles (which is the last book of the Old Testament according to the Hebrew order, see Luke 24:44 e.g.) there is a major cliffhanger in that there is no Messiah, no temple and no land for God’s people. It’s a story without an ending. The Gospels and Acts are the next chapters in that story.

<sup>10</sup> See Gordon Wenham “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story” and GK Beale “God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth.”

<sup>11</sup> It never was subject to just one space; God is omnipresent. He allowed his glory to dwell there to serve the people so that the temple provided a context to teach truth in word and symbol.

<sup>12</sup> See Exodus 3, Exodus 19 and 1 Kings 8.

<sup>13</sup> John Stott, The Message of Acts.



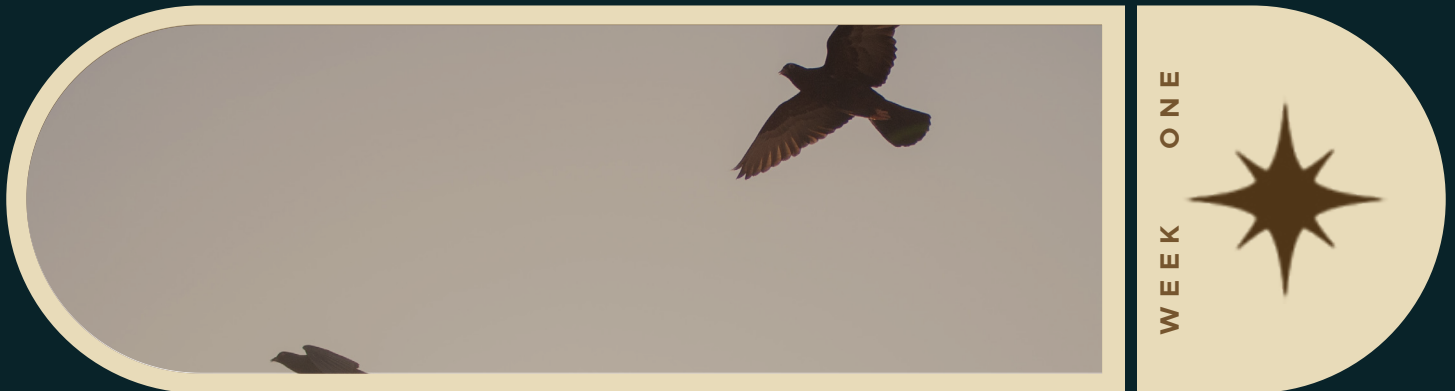
## PRAYER POINTS

- Ask God what He wants to accomplish in and through you throughout this fast. In the same way the book of Acts will serve as your guide throughout the month of February, His response to your ask will also help guide what you’re looking for as you pray.
- If you haven’t already, ask the Holy Spirit for direction on how to fast. (See our [Fasting Guide](#) for examples of how you can partake in this fast).
- Ask The Holy Spirit for a fresh revelation of God’s word as you read and pray through the book of Acts.



# WAITING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Becca Morgan



When I was pregnant with my first child, and my due date started approaching, I found myself rigorously googling what a contraction would feel like, wondering if I was going into labor or not. While the internet did its best to describe the difference between a braxton hicks contraction and a true contraction, for someone who had never experienced it, I had no idea what it was talking about.

Until it happened.

When I went into labor, I knew exactly what was happening. No one had to describe it to me. I knew my body was ready to deliver a baby.

I think about that often when I think about the disciples as they clung to Jesus' final words, before He ascended to Heaven: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). I imagine Thomas asking "How will we recognize that it's the Holy Spirit?" and Peter, "How long do we have to wait?"

Until it happened.

Acts 2:2-5 describes "Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

When the Holy Spirit shows up, there's no denying it.

Perhaps God made the disciples wait it out for a few days before the Holy Spirit showed up as a foundational act of dependence, because without the power of the Holy Spirit everything else He was asking them to do would be *impossible*.

As we'll later read, the early church faced intense persecution (which resulted in martyrdom for almost all of the disciples). Without the Holy Spirit Himself guiding them, unifying them, building them up, strengthening them and supernaturally making a way for the gospel to advance, they would've been paralyzed with fear and immediately scattered.

Instead, the Gospel advanced, and you and I hundreds of generations later, are recipients of the same Good News received by the disciples. All because of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

As we dive into the book of Acts, understanding the supreme necessity of the Holy Spirit is essential. Everything else is predicated on God showing up in the way He promised to help His people accomplish *His* mission. Even more importantly for us to understand is the supreme necessity of the Holy Spirit here and now to accomplish *His* mission. The book of Acts serves as a model for us of the purpose and function of God's church. Apart from Him, we labor in vain.

All of us have people in our lives that we want to know Jesus or return to Him, people who need healing, freedom or reconciliation, or people we feel called to serve, pray for or share the gospel with ... but like the disciples, we must first wait. While we don't wait on the Holy Spirit to show up for the first time, the way the disciples waited at Pentecost, we *do* wait on His direction, prompting, courage and power. Then, we respond with obedience and dependence. While you pray through this week's reading, pay attention to the disciples' response to the guiding of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of their submission to Him. Ask God what it looks like for you to live with that kind of dependence. We've heard it said, dependence is the way of the Kingdom of God. If that's true, where's God asking you to trust Him?



## DAY 1: READ ACTS CHAPTER 1

### Prayer Points:

- God, help me understand my role in the advancement of your Kingdom on Earth and fill me with the courage and power to walk in that role.
- God, teach me to trust you in the waiting. I surrender to you my hopes and expectations as I wait.
- God, help me to live with an eternal perspective – orienting my life around what matters most to you and keeping at the forefront of my mind, your return.

### Talking Points for Parents:

- Scripture tells us that WE have the Holy Spirit inside of us when we put our faith in Jesus and Jesus becomes the leader of our lives (1 Corinthians 6:19).

**Ask:** What does it mean for Jesus to be the leader of your life?

**Do or Respond:** Throughout the month of February we will be praying for people in our lives that are close to us but far from God. Make a list of 2-3 people your kids know that don't know Jesus yet.

## DAY 2: READ ACTS CHAPTER 2

### Prayer Points:

- God, I pray for supernatural unity among believers in our city as we work in partnership with each other and in partnership with you to see your Kingdom come in Middle Tennessee.
- God, I pray that the nations would be represented in your church in our city and that barriers among nations would be torn down and replaced with generosity and hospitality toward one another.
- God, would you give me the boldness and courage of Peter to share the Gospel with those I'm in proximity to, trusting the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts?

### Talking Points for Parents:

- The early Church was unified. Acts 2:44 says, "all the believers were together and had everything in common."
- A definition for unity is being together or at one with someone or something. It is the opposite of being divided.

**Ask:** How can you be a person who brings unity with friends, on a team and at home?

**Respond:** Think about the different groups or teams you are a part of and who you could invite to join you. Simply asking someone to join you who plays alone or eats lunch alone could make a huge difference in their life.



### DAY 3: READ ACTS CHAPTER 3

#### Prayer Points:

- God, give me eyes to see those on the fringes of society and the grace to be interruptible to those in need, trusting your Divine appointments.
- Holy Spirit, would you fill me with faith to believe you can heal and to also ask you to heal those around me for the sake of their knowing you?
- God, would you soften the hearts of those in our city who are hardened toward you and would you make a way for them to hear the gospel with fresh ears?

#### Talking Points for Parents:

- Peter and John saw someone who was alone and showed him dignity and respect. They included him.

**Ask:** What is something practical that you can do to make someone you know who is different or doesn't have a lot of friends at school, in your neighborhood or on your sports team feel included?

#### Respond:

- Ask that person to play together.
- Share a snack with that person.
- Write them a note telling them something kind.



# PRAYER AND MISSION

By Becca Morgan



WEEK TWO



Picture this, you just graduated from college and you're looking for entry-level jobs. While perusing LinkedIn, you stumble across an entry level position that catches your eye and you decide to apply. The interview goes well, you like what the company is about, so you decide if you're presented with an offer, you'll accept.

Days later, the offer letter comes your way, but instead of an entry-level role, you receive an offer for the role of Vice President.

You're flattered, but terrified. Your responsibilities and experience (or lack thereof) make this assignment monumental...

There's a key element of the story I left out.

Your first day on the job you're given two things: an instruction manual on how to be Vice President and the phone number of the guy who wrote the manual. This changes everything. Not only do you have something you can reference back to over and over, you can call the author whenever you need help. The role of Vice President just went from impossible to possible.

This metaphor is an attempt to illustrate the magnitude of the assignment Jesus gave to the 12 disciples in Acts 1:8, which says, "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Jesus entrusted the twelve with taking the Gospel to the nations, but before He did that He promised a guide, The Holy Spirit. The full verse reads **"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 1:8).

God didn't just give the disciples His phone number. He gave them *Himself*.

The word prayer, or references to it, are mentioned over 30 times in the book of Acts. That's only second to the book of Psalms. As we previously mentioned, the book of Acts functions as a model for how God intended the church to function, as well as a documentation of how the Gospel began to spread after the sending of the Holy Spirit.

In fewer words, the book of Acts is a beautiful picture of the marriage between prayer and mission; between intimacy and responsibility; between weakness and power.

The roles of the Holy Spirit (through prayer) in God's mission are guiding, healing, revealing sin, resurrecting the dead and extending salvation. Without His presence, mission can't go forth. Acknowledging just how critical the presence of the Holy Spirit is in so great a work reminds us that we're invited participants in God's mission. He does not need us, but He does *want* to share His life with us. It is our honor and to God's glory that we get to share the Gospel with our neighbors, coworkers and friends in words, works and wonders, but it is only through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit that any lasting fruit will come from our efforts.



## DAY 4: READ ACTS CHAPTER 4

### Prayer Points:

- God, would you give me courage to live out my faith with the boldness of Peter and John – being unashamed of the Gospel, even in the face of those who disagree with me?
- Holy Spirit, would you fill your Church with power as we proclaim the gospel message across our city?
- God, would you give the followers of Jesus in our city the same unity, boldness and generosity of those in Acts 4:32-37, and would our city be a place where there is no need because of the awareness and generosity of the church here?

### Talking Points for Parents:

- The early church in Acts was extremely generous. Scripture says “No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had” (Acts 4:32).
- Talk to your kids about what it means to be generous.

**Ask:** What is something that you can do together as a family to be generous?

#### Respond:

- Pack a supply kit for a homeless person.
- Buy flowers for a teacher or someone who works at your child’s school.
- Research [local organizations in your area](#) and serve together as a family.

## DAY 5: READ ACTS CHAPTER 5

### Prayer Points:

- God, would you bring to light any area of my life that I am keeping from you out of selfishness and help me to trust you with that area?
- God, would you work in and through your Church in a way that stirs curiosity in the hearts of those who don’t know you, because they are in awe of how you’re moving and what you’re doing?
- God, would you help me to be obedient to you and what you’re asking of me despite what the people around me or my opposers may think?

### Talking Points for Parents:

- The disciples were obedient to the Holy Spirit above all else. Acts 5:29 says “We must obey God rather than human beings!”

**Ask:** Talk to your kids about what it means to listen and obey. As parents, we want our kids to listen to our direction and obey when we ask them to do something. The same is true for the Holy Spirit.

**Respond:** Pray together with your kids and ask God if there is something that He is asking you to do together.



## DAY 6: READ ACTS CHAPTER 6

### Prayer Points:

- God, thank you for the gifts you have given me to give away to others. I ask that you would use my natural gifts and talents to be a blessing to others for the sake of your Kingdom.
- God, as the people of your Church become aware of their unique gifts, would you use them to take the Gospel across Middle Tennessee, beyond the way that the word of God spread in verse 7?
- Stephen stayed true to your word in the face of opposition. Would you give me the grace to be true to your word and to your call on my life in the face of opposition, that my life may be pleasing to you?

### Talking Points for Parents:

- In Acts 6, the church leaders gave different people different jobs based on their natural giftings. We have gifts that we can give away to others as well.

**Ask:** What gifts do you see in yourself? Are you patient? Are you full of empathy for others? Are you kind to everyone? Are you creative?

- Whatever their gifts are, talk to them about how God created them with unique gifts that they get to give away to others.
- Ask them how they can use their gifts to uniquely love their friends.

### Respond:

- Make a plan with your family to care for someone and allows everyone to use their gifts. Is there a new family in the neighborhood? Maybe bake some cookies, invite them over for a game night and enjoy having new friends!

## DAY 7: READ ACTS CHAPTER 7

### Prayer Points:

- God, I pray that your people (including myself) would have a knowledge of Scripture that leads to understanding, the ability to discern what you're doing and the courage to partner with you, like Stephen did in front of the Sanhedrin.
- Lord, Stephen was bold in the face of extreme suffering. Would you teach your Church to see suffering as something to be neither pursued nor avoided, but give us strength to endure suffering and persevere?
- God, would you help me to love my enemies and would you teach your Church to love their enemies in all circumstances?

### Talking Points for Parents:

- In Acts 7:59, Stephen prays for the people who are hurting him. As followers of Jesus, we are to love our enemies.
  - A definition of enemy is a person who is actively opposed or mean to someone or something.

**Ask:** Is there someone in your life who really gets on their nerves? Or is there someone you have a hard time calling a friend?

**Respond:** Take a few minutes to pray for that person by name, and if it is appropriate, think of something kind you can do for that person.

## DAY 8: READ ACTS CHAPTER 8

### Prayer Points:

- God, I pray that you would prepare hearts across Middle Tennessee to receive the Good News of the Gospel. I pray for curiosity that would lead to repentance and repentance that would lead to joy, as people trust you with their salvation.
- Lord, you are the source of all joy. I pray that when the Gospel is preached in Middle Tennessee, the fruit would be great joy.
- God, I pray for hearts that are attuned to your Spirit and willing to follow you wherever you lead for the sake of more people knowing you.

### Talking Points for Parents:

**Ask:** God spoke clearly and frequently to His followers in the book of Acts and He still speaks to us today, sometimes we just don't know how to listen.

**Respond:** Pray together with your kids that they would have hearts that are carefully listening to the Spirit and that are eager to follow your lead. Pray that they would trust the Holy Spirit inside of them from an early age.

## DAY 9: READ ACTS CHAPTER 9

### Prayer Points:

- God, would you help me to obey you the way that Ananias obeyed you, even when it doesn't make logical sense? Would you give me a heart that doesn't hesitate to trust you and obeys whatever you ask of me?
- God, I surrender to you the people in my life that feel too far out of your reach. Lord, if you can transform Saul's heart, you can transform anyone's heart. Would you increase my faith to believe that you CAN and you WANT to bring salvation to them?
- Lord, I pray that as your Church is obedient to you, that we would see miracles like those experienced by the early Church. Would you give us the boldness to ask and the faith to believe that you will heal?

### Talking Points for Parents:

- God took someone like Saul, who was killing Jesus' followers and changed his heart to love Jesus.

**Ask:** Did you know that even as a kid, you can talk to people about Jesus? Is there anyone in your life that you want to share Jesus with? Talk with them about what it could look like to tell their friends about their love for Jesus.

**Respond:** Take some time as a family to share why you follow Jesus and how you made that decision. Talk about ways you could talk to others about Him in simple ways that feel comfortable and exciting.

## DAY 10: READ ACTS CHAPTER 10

### Prayer Points:

- Thank you Jesus, that you are always working. Even when I can't see what you're doing, you are working behind the scenes, and at the right time you invite your people into what you're doing. Lord, I don't take it lightly that you invite us to partner with you as you reveal yourself to the world. Thank you that I get to participate with you, alongside others, as you redeem your creation.
- God, thank you that you are one who "does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears you and does what is right" (Acts 10:34-35). Thank you, again, that I am the beneficiary of that promise.
- Lord, I pray that you would raise up people in our city and in our church that specifically feel called to the nations where Christ has not yet been preached.

### Talking Points for Parents:

- Scripture shows us that God is always working and that He wants everyone (including us) to know Him.

**Ask:** What or who do you want to thank God for?

**Respond:** Spend a few minutes praying together and thanking God for whatever is on their heart.



# TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

By Josh Reed



WEEK  
THREE





Growing up in metro Atlanta during a time of explosive growth, there were mixed feelings among the locals about what that growth meant. On the one hand, many people became wealthy overnight due to selling a farm for another subdivision or corporate office park. The local governments were able to upgrade utilities and schools due to the increase in tax revenue. The growth attracted restaurants, malls and companies, thus creating more opportunities, but not all loved what was happening. The newfound traffic, the landscape of rooftops, instead of tree-lined fields, and the rise of prices proved to be too much for many. At zoning boards across the county, a new term arose that captured this sentiment perfectly: NIMBY. Nimby wasn't actually a word, but an acronym that stands for "not in my backyard", with the intent of persuading the powers to be to stop letting all these non-locals in. It was a wild time, but that issue was not unique to metro Atlanta. The issue of "othering" has been happening almost since the beginning of time and it's exactly the kind of thing Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, begins to tear down in the book of Acts.

Since God's call of Abram in Genesis 12, a clear distinction between Jew and Gentile was established, and God commanded Jews to separate themselves from Gentile cultures lest they be corrupted by their idolatry and moral degradation. This separation was always meant to be a temporary tutor, so that all people would learn what it meant to be in relationship with the true and living God. One of Jesus' key disciples, Peter, a Jew, goes up to pray on a rooftop one day and the Lord speaks to him about a Gentile named Cornelius. Simultaneously, the Lord speaks to Cornelius about Peter, and God orchestrates a meeting between Peter and Cornelius – Jew and Gentile, insider and outsider.<sup>14</sup> This meeting is so important, Luke dedicates two chapters to it, but it functions as a hinge of where the story is about to go – to Antioch, to Rome. The time had come in Acts 1:8 to go global.

The center of the Christian movement began shifting from Jerusalem to Antioch as the first steps of the plan. Antioch was a booming city, a place where locals made money off progress, local authorities were able to upgrade services due to tax revenue and where people moved because of business opportunities. It was a melting pot with people from all over the world there and it was the place some people, whose names remain unknown, took the Gospel from Jerusalem. It was this small, fledgling, multi-ethnic church where the global spread of the Gospel grew legs. Through prayer and fasting, the Holy Spirit commissioned Paul and Barnabas to go and make disciples among the nations. Through prayer, the Spirit guided them, worked through them in miraculous ways, protected them and taught them to plant new works, appoint leaders, set sound doctrine and share the message of Jesus in ways that different people in different cities could understand.

The Holy Spirit does the same thing today.

As you consider these stories that Luke has given us, try to put yourself in the stories: On the roof with Peter, in Cornelius' house, at Mark's house when Peter shows up, in the prayer meeting in Antioch, in Derbe and Lystra, and in Philippi and Athens. Imagine yourself being pulled into the mission with Paul, trained, released, not knowing what you were going to encounter ... and doing it anyway. Why? Because someone chose to let the Gospel come to your city. Someone chose not to say "not in my backyard".

As you're reading and praying this week, consider what it would take for this missionary impulse to catch a newfound fire today – both to welcome others into the church as well as take this Gospel to the ends of the Earth, because Acts 1:8 is still true today just like it was 2000 years ago.

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<sup>14</sup> Peter was a Jesus insider, Cornelius an outsider. But, Cornelius was a cultural insider, Peter an outsider. This is crucial to understand about the "othering" game...it's completely arbitrary depending on what category is being considered.



## DAY 11: READ ACTS CHAPTER 11

### Prayer Points:

- Lord, would you search our hearts for any bias or prejudice toward groups of people, and would you bring conviction that leads to repentance so that we may be a church that is reflective of your Kingdom?
- God, let me not forget that it is your grace that changes hearts and draws people to yourself. I commit all of my plans to reach my friends and neighbors, Middle Tennessee and the nations to you.
- God, would you raise up prophets in our church and provide outlets for them to share what they're hearing from you on behalf of your Church.

### Talking Points for Parents:

**Ask:** Remind your kids that we all make a decision to follow Jesus at different times in life and there may be people in their lives that may not know God.

**Respond:** Pray together for someone in their life who is close to them but far from God.

## DAY 12: READ ACTS CHAPTER 12

### Prayer Points:

- God, would you teach me to pray earnestly for your Church and for those who are living captive to sin and fear?
- Lord, would you increase our faith as a church to believe that with you anything really is possible? Teach us to pray with the faith of the early church and give us eyes to see the miracles you're already performing.
- God, you cannot be mocked. Thank you that your word and your plans always prevail. Would you instill in your people a reverence and healthy fear of you, knowing you are King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

### Talking Points for Parents:

- The Church in Acts was full of faith and they saw God do some incredible things in response to their faith.
- Hebrews 11:1 says, that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

**Ask:** What are some circumstances that have been hard to maintain faith?

**Respond:** Are there any "big things" that your family is asking God for? If so, talk about them together.

## DAY 13: READ ACTS CHAPTER 13

### Prayer Points:

- God, I pray for the leaders of our church. Would you give them vision and direction from Heaven as they guide us to what you're calling us to. I pray for them to have humility and hearts that obey the Spirit's guidance.
- Jesus, give your people hearts that are softened to you, able to recognize when you're speaking and working and the courage to partner with you in what you're doing.
- Holy Spirit, I pray that you would disarm the enemy in any way he could be trying to come against what you are doing in and through your people in Middle Tennessee.

### Talking Points for Parents:

**Ask:** Pray together as a family for the leaders of the church, including volunteer leaders in Cross Point Kids and Cross Point Students.

**Respond:** If applicable, take time as a family to write a note of encouragement to a leader in kids or student ministry that has impacted your family.

## DAY 14: READ ACTS CHAPTER 14

### Prayer Points:

- God, thank you for the example that the apostles set for us of supernatural perseverance in the face of opposition. I pray that you would fill believers throughout Middle Tennessee to share the Gospel in their neighborhoods, schools and workplaces, even when it's met by criticism and judgment. Would you continue to guide your people into new places and make a way for us to share about you?
- God, we pray that you would remove idolization of any kind from the hearts of your people. You are God and nothing comes close to your goodness, holiness or love. Your glory is unmatched. We repent for where we have put humans in place of you and ask that you take back your right place on the throne of our hearts.
- God, we ask that you would raise up church planters in Middle Tennessee that feel called to specific communities in our area and who are anointed to reach people that otherwise would not be reached.

### Talking Points for Parents:

- Even though many people wanted to kill the disciples, they persevered and kept talking about Jesus to everyone they met.
- The definition of persevere is to "continue in a course of action even in the face of difficulty or with little or no prospect of success."

**Ask:** Is there anything in their lives that they need to persevere through? Are there any obstacles to work through as a family to help?

**Respond:** Pray together, asking God for the strength to not give up.

## DAY 15: READ ACTS CHAPTER 15

### Prayer Points:

- God, would you bring to light any religious spirit that exists in the body of believers in our city that values tradition and rules more than relationship? We long to be a body who is so connected to you that we know your heart and act in accordance with it.
- God, we believe that with you, Anything's Possible. We ask that you make yourself known to those who seem the furthest out of your reach.
- God, we pray that your Church in Middle Tennessee would be united in heart and mission, as we work together to reach those who do not know you.

### Talking Points for Parents:

**Ask:** As parents, we know the value of rules, but this is a great opportunity to have a conversation as a family about God's love. Remind your kids that love is for everyone and we get the opportunity to show that love. Talk about what it means to love people the way God does and that could be the very thing that opens someone's heart to Jesus.

**Respond:** As a family, brainstorm ways that God shows His love to us. How can we use this list to go and love others the way He loves us?

## DAY 16: READ ACTS CHAPTER 16

### Prayer Points:

- God, we submit our strategies and plans to you, inviting you to redirect us as we strive to make you known in our communities.
- God, I am prone to avoid suffering at all costs. Would you help me understand the role of suffering in your Kingdom and help me neither seek it out nor avoid it? Instead, when I do experience suffering for your sake, would you help me to lean into you, trusting your sovereignty and love for me?
- God, you take impossible circumstances and turn them into miracles. I pray that those who are experiencing impossible circumstances would have testimonies of your faithfulness and deliverance.

### Talking Points for Parents:

- Sometimes life is really hard. Things happen that hurt us and we feel sad. The people in the early Church experienced that same sadness when Jesus died and as they watched their friends lose their lives for the sake of telling people about Jesus. God also promises to meet with us in our suffering. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 says, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

**Ask:** Is there anything in your life that makes you feel sad? Or anything that you're scared of? Why do you think God allows us to feel that way?

**Respond:** Pray together for whatever is bringing them heartache or grief, reminding them that even in sad or scary moments, God is just as near as the happy times.



## DAY 17: READ ACTS CHAPTER 17

### Prayer Points:

- God, we ask for your perspective on opposition. Over and over again we see that there is always opposition of some kind when the gospel is preached. Would you help your Church to not be intimidated by opposition, but view it as a sign that you are working?
- God, we pray that you would tear down the idols of sex, pleasure, consumerism and status that exist in Nashville, and the surrounding areas? Would you bring people to repentance as they see that these idols don't bring them the satisfaction and hope that only you can?
- Thank you Father, that you are Lord of Heaven and Earth, and thank you that you're not far from your creation. I pray that the reality of your nearness would become even more true for me, and that those who don't know you, would wake up to the reality of who you are.

### Talking Points for Parents:

- At the time of the early Church, there were a lot of idols that looked like statues that people would worship. Today idols are a little more hidden. Idols can look like caring about money, things or people more than Jesus.

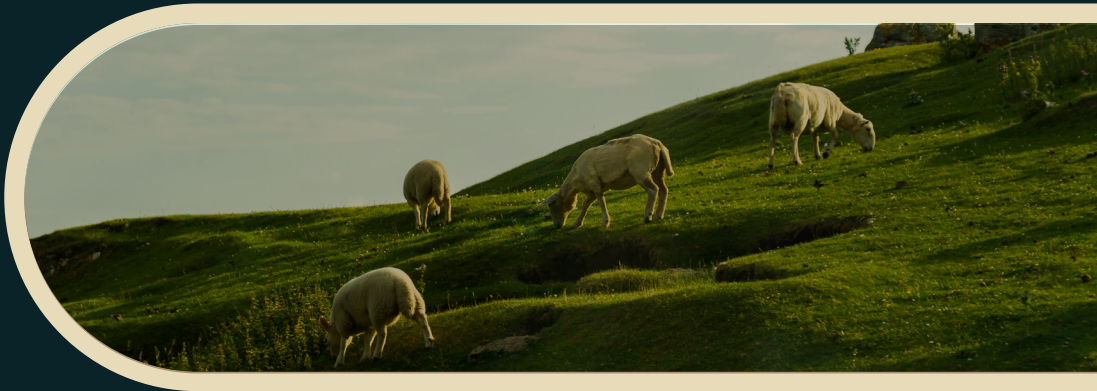
**Ask:** Is there anything in your life that you feel like is distracting from your relationship with Jesus? Is there something that you feel like you care about more than Him?

### Respond:

- Pray together and ask God to take His rightful place in your hearts and for the grace to see idols for what they are. Thank Him for the beautiful things we have and ask Him to teach us how to let them have their right place in our lives.
- Take a few minutes to look outside or go on a walk together. Ask your kids what they see in creation that is beautiful? Take a few minutes to thank God for His creation that He designed for us to enjoy.

# A JESUS SHAPED LIFE

By Josh Reed



WEEK FOUR



Ever since I was a little kid, I loved going to the beach with my family. I was that kid that went HARD at the beach: body surfing waves, building sand castles, playing beach games, taking walks. By the time I laid my head on the pillow at night, I had expended every ounce of energy I had, only to wake up and do it all over again! As I now have a family of my own, my kids have followed that same trajectory.

This concept was illustrated so vividly for me once when we took a stroll on the shoreline. As I took a step, my son would find my footprint and put his little foot in the much larger indentation that my feet had made. Walking in my footprints stretched his stride, challenged his ability and evoked both a joy and a wonder, that transformed something mundane into quite the adventure.

The book of Acts has been action packed, arranging highlights from across 30 years to tell a cohesive story about how Jesus continued to work in and through his Spirit-filled disciples to spread the Gospel to the ends of the Earth and form a church from every tribe, tongue and nation. Luke has done a masterful job instructing Theophilus in the work and way of Jesus, but Luke is an evangelist, which means he's doing more than just informing his friend of facts. He's also calling Theophilus to follow Jesus. Luke intentionally zeroes in on the trials of the Apostle Paul in the last few chapters to teach a costly concept for Christians: **When you follow in the footsteps of Jesus, your story and stride will strangely begin to take on the shape of His.**

The Gospel says that through the suffering of Christ, sin is paid for and resurrection life is granted. This is the longing of *every* human heart: forgiveness, freedom from guilt and shame, and eternal life! That message has to be proclaimed, heard and received by faith for it to become Good News for *actual* persons. Paul knows it's more than mere words stated, but words *embodied*, that carries with it the power to transform the lives of others, even our enemies – just like Jesus.

This is why he tells the Colossians, a church that was planted more than likely by one of Paul's disciples:

Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Col. 1:24-27 NIV)

As he lived out this Gospel in every city he entered, there were times he was welcomed and times he was persecuted. Every day was an adventure; but it was an adventure *with* Jesus. The persecution wasn't because he did anything wrong. He was suffering for righteousness sake. Just like Jesus. That's what he was filling up "in regard to Christ's afflictions" (Col. 1:24); giving people the opportunity to see someone who both loved well *and* was committed to the truth, even to their enemies. *Especially* to their enemies. His confidence in the purposes of God (1:27) fueled his activity and gave him a hope that transcended both joy and pain.

That's what you and I can bank on too when we take steps in His footprints. It transforms the mundane days into adventures that evoke joy and wonder, even in the midst of suffering and sorrow, because there is a greater hope and a bigger purpose we live for. Just like Paul. Just like Jesus.



## DAY 18: READ ACTS CHAPTER 18

### Prayer Points:

- Lord, we pray that you would bring encouragement and comfort to church leaders in Middle Tennessee as they face opposition and setbacks. Would you draw them close to you, comforting them in their trials and giving them courage to press forward?
- God, we pray that you would raise up people like Apollos in the next generation that are filled with zeal for you and are eager to partner with you in your mission. Help us to identify who those people are in our church and teach them.
- God, we also pray that you would raise up people like Priscilla and Aquila in our church that can strengthen and encourage young believers in their faith.

### Talking Points for Parents:

**Ask:** What leader do you know that has impacted your life? Who is a current leader in your life?

**Respond:** Take a few minutes as a family to pray for these leaders. Pray God would give them grace to lead, He would bring them comfort and they would be encouraged in their hearts.

## DAY 19: READ ACTS CHAPTER 19

### Prayer Points:

- Holy Spirit, we ask that you would fill your followers in Middle Tennessee with power and authority from the Holy Spirit and they would begin experiencing the gifts of the Spirit as you deposit them.
- God, I thank you for the place where I first heard the Gospel preached and received your salvation. I pray that the church in Middle Tennessee would be a people who are quick to share the good news of the gospel with everyone they encounter.
- God, I pray for the relationship between the Church and the civic government in Middle Tennessee. I ask that you would give your Church favor with the government and that God-loving, sober-minded people would be a part of government entities.

### Talking Points for Parents:

**Ask:** Has your child decided to make Jesus the leader of their life or has your child expressed an interest in taking the next step in their faith?

**Respond:** If they have chosen to make Jesus the leader of their life, take a few minutes to talk about the day they made that decision or maybe the day they were baptized if they've experienced that. Then take a few minutes to pray with your child, thanking God for their salvation and asking Him to help them never forget the joy of it. If your child has shown interest and those conversations have started in your home and you would like a safe, kid-friendly experience as a family to talk through it all, we offer First Steps at all locations. Talk to your kids director or [click here](#) for more information.



## DAY 20: READ ACTS CHAPTER 20

### Prayer Points:

- God, thank you for being a healer. You healed the young man who fell and I trust that what you did once you can do again.
- God, we commit to you the people you've entrusted us to shepherd as a church. We acknowledge that they are your children and that you are sovereign over all. We ask that you would protect them from the temptations of the world that would try to lead them astray and equip us to walk with them.
- God, we thank you for God-centered community and relationships. We pray that every believer would have the type of community that Paul had in Troas.

### Talking Points for Parents:

**Ask:** We are not meant to follow Jesus alone and that is one of the wonderful things about Cross Point Kids – a community of people who love kids, wanting to help them find and follow Jesus together!

**Respond:** Pray together with your child that they would have a Christ-centered community as they grow up. Pray that there would be people, in addition to their parents, to guide them toward Jesus. Pray for their peers in their small groups, no matter the age, that they would grow together toward Him.

## DAY 21: READ ACTS CHAPTER 21

### Prayer Points:

- God I thank you for the hospitality of the Christ followers in the book of Acts. I pray for the greater churches in Middle Tennessee to be known for their hospitality toward one another and toward our neighbors.
- God, would you grow your people in Christ-likeness like we see Paul grow in Christ-likeness throughout the book of Acts? Will you align us with your heart so much so that fear, even fear of death, cannot stop us from being obedient to you?
- Thank you God, that you are our protector. I pray that you would preserve the lives of those who love you for the sake of your Kingdom's advancement.

### Talking Points for Parents:

- Showing hospitality to people was something that Jesus did constantly while He walked the Earth as a human, and something that the disciples did as well.
- Hospitality is the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors or strangers.

**Ask:** Have you experienced someone showing hospitality and how did it make you feel? Who is someone that you can show hospitality to?

### Respond:

- Bake cookies for a neighbor.
- Invite a friend over for dinner.
- Eat lunch with someone new at school.

## DAY 22: READ ACTS CHAPTER 22

### Prayer Points:

- God, thank you for the testimony that you've given me. I pray for courage to share my testimony with boldness.
- God, I pray that the government would continue to allow freedom of religion, so that people may practice their faith without fear of persecution, and that all people would act with civility toward one another.

### Talking Points for Parents:

- In Acts 22, Paul recounts the story of how he met Jesus to a group of people. God has given each of us a story, just like God gave Paul a story when He transformed his life.

**Ask:** What made you want to follow Jesus?

**Respond:** Take a few minutes to share with your kids what made YOU decide to follow Jesus.

## DAY 23: READ ACTS CHAPTER 23

### Prayer Points:

- God, I pray that you would give your people Divine strategy and wisdom as we share about who you are and what you've done for us. I pray that we would be "wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16).
- God, I thank you that you work through even the smallest of details. I trust that you continue to work in this way in the lives of the people I am praying for.
- God, you knew that Paul needed to get to Rome and you made a way for that to happen. Thank you that nothing is impossible for you.

### Talking Points for Parents:

- Paul knew he needed to go to Rome. It was part of God's plan for him. God gave him a strategy and wisdom in order to accomplish the task at hand.
- A definition for wisdom written by pastor John Piper in his sermon "The Great Work of the Only Wise God" is "knowing the greatest goal in any situation, and the best way to achieve that goal."

**Ask:** Where do you need God's wisdom in your life?

- When you need help or need to make a big decision, who are the people in your life that you can also ask for wisdom, along with God? Why do you consider them to be wise?

## DAY 24: READ ACTS CHAPTER 24

### Prayer Points:

- God, I pray your Church would “strive always to keep [its] conscience clear before God and man” (Acts 24:16).
- God, I ask for your Church in Middle Tennessee to be marked by perseverance, not losing sight of the mission in front of it to make you famous in this region.
- Lord, I pray that those with influence in our cities would have ears to hear the good news of the Gospel and respond to its life-changing power.

### Talking Points for Parents:

- God cares about our hearts very much and He cares that we are honest with Him and with each other. In Acts 24:16 Paul says, “so I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.”
- Conscience is defined as an inner feeling or voice viewed as acting as a guide to the rightness or wrongness of one’s behavior.

**Ask:** Is there anything that is keeping you from having a clear conscience? Is there anything you continue to think about that is bothering you so we can talk about it?

**Respond:** Pray and ask God to forgive you for whatever could be giving them an unclear conscience and ask for His help to live differently. Remind your kids that God will always forgive us and we do not have to worry about being honest with Him.



# NOW WHAT?



WEEK FIVE



February is coming to a close. With just a few days left, your body is probably tired and you've likely become so acquainted with hunger pangs that you barely recognize them anymore.

As we round the corner for the final lap of our month of prayer and fasting, it's time to begin thinking about the implications of this fast once it's over.

Although fasting itself is temporary, what God does in that time is eternal.

By the end of this month, we will have spent 28 days praying and asking God for His heart for Middle Tennessee and to move in extraordinary ways in our communities, workplaces, schools and cities. If we believe that God hears our prayers, He's looking for people to help Him accomplish them.

As Pastor Kevin always says "Prayer is not the only thing we do, but it is the first thing we do." As the book of Acts taught us, prayer and mission go hand-in-hand. We cannot simply pray, we must also respond. It is both our privilege and responsibility as followers of Jesus to listen to the Holy Spirit and to obey Him as He leads us to people that don't yet know Him.

Your temptation these last few days will be to take your foot off the gas and ease your way to the finish line, but what if you didn't? What if in these last few days you got serious about asking the Holy Spirit to orchestrate opportunities for you to share the Gospel with those you're in proximity with, to meet a tangible need for someone, to start serving with a local partner, to lead a group this year or to share your testimony with a family member?

God wants to partner with you. Scripture tells us that "that harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37). Will you let Him?



## DAY 25: READ ACTS CHAPTER 25

### Prayer Points:

- God, you used the government to protect Paul. I pray that the government would continue to serve as a form of protection for persecution. I pray specifically for those sharing the Gospel in other countries. Would you give them favor with government officials and use law and order to protect them from unjust punishment?
- Father, please give us the words to say (or not say) in times where we feel like we don't know what to do or say. Thank you for Paul's example in this!

### Talking Points for Parents:

**Ask:** As a family, have an age-appropriate conversation about people who live in places where they can get into trouble for talking about God.

**Respond:** Pray for the people you discussed, asking God to remove any barriers in place that would keep them from knowing and loving Him.

## DAY 26: READ ACTS CHAPTER 26

### Prayer Points:

- God, I pray that your church would be so committed to your mission that we'd be willing to testify about you in even the most difficult of circumstances. Give us the boldness and courage of Paul and the love of Jesus for your people that we would waste no opportunity.
- Father we pray for Civic Leaders to be honorable and full of integrity, so that justice would not be just an ideal, but an actuality.

### Talking Points for Parents:

- Following Jesus and obeying His commands takes great courage.

**Ask:** Is there something that you feel God leading you to do, but you're scared to do? Can you tell me more about what makes doing that scary for you?

**Respond:** Pray and ask God for courage.



## DAY 27: READ ACTS CHAPTER 27

### Prayer Points:

- God, I pray that just as Paul withstood the storm through faith, that you would help your people to endure the storms of life through faith in you. Would you use the storms of life to grow us in maturity and Christ-likeness?
- God, I pray that your Church would hear your voice so well that even in the most dire of circumstances we would know that you are with us.
- Thank you God, that nothing can get in the way of your plan. We trust that whatever you want to happen in Middle Tennessee will happen and we are eager to participate in it with you.

### Talking Points for Parents:

- God wants to use all of us, young and old, to help tell the world about His goodness and love, through words and deeds.

**Ask:** Isn't it exciting that God invites us to tell people about Him? What are some ways you could think of to talk to your friends about Jesus that would feel comfortable for you?

**Respond:** Pray together with your children and ask God to give them His heart for people in their lives.

## DAY 28: READ ACTS CHAPTER 28

### Prayer Points:

- God, you use detours and make them purposeful. I submit the plans to you, trusting your ways are better. I trust that you will accomplish your plans for my life, I just need to remain obedient to you.
- God, I ask that your Church would "proclaim the kingdom of God and teach about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance" (Acts 28:31). Would that be our legacy in Middle Tennessee?

### Talking Points for Parents:

- Even when things are looking like they won't go our way, God is always working.

**Ask:** Is there something in your life that doesn't seem to be working out the way you want?

**Respond:** Pray and ask God if there is anything He would like to tell you or teach you about Himself in that situation.

## REVIEW DAY: WHAT'S NEXT?

### Prayer Points:

- God, thank you for what you've done in me throughout the last 28 days. Thank you for what you pruned, what you've planted and what you've done under the surface. Thank you for the gift of your word and the blueprint you gave your Church through the book of Acts.
- God, I pray for zeal and spiritual fervor that leads to action as I walk away from this month. Will you fill me with hunger for your presence? Will you give me your heart for those who don't yet know you?

### Talking Points for Parents:

- Even though the month of February is over, God always wants to partner with us and we always have access to God no matter what.  
**Ask:** What have you done or learned this month that you want to keep up? What did you enjoy most about doing this together as a family?  
**Respond:** Take time to put a plan into action that celebrates what God did during the month. Work to create rhythms that continue the conversation and thank God for all of those sweet family moments!
- Parents, we hope you enjoyed this special time that you created for your family and pray that you experienced Jesus in a beautiful way together. Know our Cross Point Kids and Student teams are grateful to partner with you and can always recommend other resources to continue the conversation if you would like. Simply check in with your kids or student pastor so they can help you find the right resources for your family!

