



LIFE Group Discussion Guide

February 15, 2026

Acts 21:17-26

CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

OPENING

**When have you had to set aside your personal preferences for the sake of unity?
What was that like?**

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Christian maturity isn't only shown through bold conviction—it's also revealed through humble flexibility. Paul knows he is free in Christ, yet he willingly limits that freedom to protect relationships and the witness of the church. This passage challenges us to

consider how our actions affect others and whether we value unity more than personal rights.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read Acts 21:17–26 aloud together. Consider having multiple readers.

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Paul arrives in Jerusalem and meets with church leaders who rejoice over God's work among the Gentiles. However, tensions arise due to rumors about Paul's teachings. To protect unity, the leaders ask Paul to participate in a Jewish purification ritual. Though not required for salvation, Paul willingly complies, demonstrating humility and commitment to peace within the church.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **How do the Jerusalem leaders initially respond to Paul's report?**
They rejoice and give glory to God for what He has done among the Gentiles.
- **What concerns do they raise about Paul's reputation?**
They explain that many Jewish believers have heard rumors that Paul teaches against Moses and Jewish customs.
- **Why do you think these rumors were so damaging to the church?**
They created division, suspicion, and misunderstanding among believers.
- **What exactly do the leaders ask Paul to do, and what is the purpose?**
Participate in a purification ritual to publicly show respect for Jewish law and ease tensions.
- **How does Paul's response reflect Christ-like humility?**
He willingly sacrifices personal rights to serve others and protect unity.
- **What freedoms do believers sometimes need to limit for the sake of others?**
Preferences about worship styles, personal opinions, cultural practices, or social habits.
- **How can pride create division within the church?**
Pride leads to defensiveness, harsh words, and unwillingness to listen or compromise.
- **Where might God be calling you to choose unity over personal preference?**
In family relationships, church decisions, or disagreements with other believers.

APPLICATION

- Is there a relationship where humility could bring healing or peace?
- How can our group model unity in a divided culture?

CLOSING THOUGHT

True spiritual maturity is shown through humility and love, not just knowledge or rights.

LOOKING AHEAD

Encourage your group to look ahead as we continue the series on Acts next week.

February 22, 2026 — Acts 21:27–22:29

Next week we'll explore **Acts 21:27–22:29**, where Paul faces false accusations, arrest, and opposition. We'll discuss how to respond with courage and wisdom when our faith puts us in difficult situations.

PRAYER FOCUS

- Pray for humble hearts that seek unity.
- Pray for wisdom in handling disagreements.
- Pray for the invitation portion of our worship services—that hearts would be open, the Spirit would move powerfully, and people would respond in obedience and faith.

COMMENTARY

Acts 21:17-26

21:17 The Jerusalem church was comprised mainly of Christian Jews.

21:18 James is singled out as the leader of the church in Jerusalem, along with a group of elders. It is not clear how many of the original apostles would have still been in Jerusalem, but they do not appear in the following events. This verse marks the end of this “we” section.

21:19 As Paul did in his last major meeting in Jerusalem (15:4), he told James and the church elders what God had been doing among the Gentiles through his ministry.

21:20 Having listened to Paul's report about what God had done “among the Gentiles” (v. 19), the Jerusalem leadership rejoiced but also answered back with something like one-upmanship. Mention of many thousands of Jews converting in Jerusalem was perhaps exaggeration, for the city had a population between 25,000 and 50,000. At

issue in the back-and-forth between Jerusalem leaders and Paul (minister to the Gentiles) is the role of the law in Christian faith; thus the emphasis on Jewish believers being zealous for the law. Perhaps this response also represented an attempt by believers in Jerusalem to strengthen their position as they saw the center of the church shift to Gentile Christians.

21:21 Rumor said Paul was teaching Jews who were dispersed among Gentiles to disregard Mosaic law and traditional Jewish rituals such as circumcision. To dismiss these fears, the brothers proposed a solution that would absolve Paul of the charges (vv. 23-24).

21:23-24 This proposal does not in any way imply that works of the law are necessary for salvation, which would fundamentally contradict Paul's preaching of the gospel (Rm 3:20).

21:25 The issue of the letter had been solved much earlier, and what Paul had or had not encouraged Jews living among Gentiles to do would not be clarified by the proposal of verses 23-24. James was apparently succumbing to pressures from the Jewish believers in Jerusalem. Ultimately his proposal backfired (v. 27).

21:26 It is somewhat surprising that Paul agreed to perform the ritual of purification. Perhaps he sensed this was part of God's overall plan, to which he was partially privy (vv. 10-11; 20:22-23).