



# LIFE Group Discussion Guide

February 15, 2026

Acts 21:17-26

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## 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?

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## OPENING QUESTION

- **Would you rather win an argument or keep a friendship? Why is that choice sometimes hard?**

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## DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Following Jesus isn't always about being bold or loud. Sometimes it's about being humble and choosing peace. Paul knows he hasn't done anything wrong, but he's willing to adjust his behavior to protect the church. This passage reminds us that loving others well sometimes means laying down our preferences.

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## SCRIPTURE

Read Acts 21:17–26 aloud together. Listen for words about unity, rumors, and obedience.

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## PASSAGE SUMMARY

Paul arrives in Jerusalem and meets church leaders. They're glad to see him—but rumors are spreading about what Paul teaches. To protect unity, the leaders ask Paul to take part in a Jewish purification ritual. Even though Paul doesn't have to, he agrees. This shows us that sometimes following Jesus means choosing humility instead of proving we're right.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **How do the church leaders react when Paul arrives?**  
They welcome him warmly and praise God for what He has done through Paul's ministry.
- **What rumors are people spreading about Paul?**  
That he teaches Jewish believers to abandon Moses, stop circumcision, and reject Jewish customs.
- **What do the leaders ask Paul to do?**  
Participate in a purification ritual and pay expenses for other men to show respect for Jewish traditions.
- **Why do you think this request was difficult for Paul?**  
Paul knew he was free in Christ and didn't *have* to follow the ritual. It could feel unfair or like he was giving in.
- **What does Paul's response teach us about humility?**  
He puts unity above pride and is willing to sacrifice personal freedom to protect the church.
- **When is it hard for teens to choose peace instead of being right?**  
Online arguments, friend drama, family disagreements, and school conflicts.
- **How can choosing humility protect friendships or groups?**  
It reduces conflict, builds trust, and shows love even when you disagree.

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## APPLICATION

- Where do you feel tempted to prove you're right instead of being kind?
- What's one way you can choose humility this week?

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## CLOSING THOUGHT

Being right isn't always as important as loving people well.

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## CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK

Look for one situation where you can choose peace instead of pride. Pray first and respond with humility.

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## 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 study **Acts 21:27–22:29**, where Paul is falsely accused, arrested, and given a chance to share his story. We'll talk about standing firm in faith when treated unfairly and using hard moments to point others to Jesus.

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## PRAYER FOCUS

- Pray for humble hearts in friendships and school.
- Pray for unity in our youth group and church.
- Pray for the invitation portion of our worship services—that hearts would be open, the Spirit would move powerfully, and students would respond in obedience and faith.

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## 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).