



LIFE Group Discussion Guide

March 1, 2026

Acts 22:30-23:11

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

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where standing for your faith felt risky—at work, in family conversations, or in social settings? Paul is in that exact place in this passage. He's surrounded by religious leaders who oppose him, facing serious accusations, and uncertain about what lies ahead. Yet Paul remains confident in God's calling on his life.

This scene reminds us that obedience to Christ doesn't always bring comfort. Sometimes it brings confrontation. But even when the future feels unclear, God is still in control. Paul's courage is rooted in his trust that God is guiding every step.

Reflect quietly:

- **Where might God be calling me to stand firm in my faith?**
- **What fears tend to hold me back from obedience?**

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 22:30–23:11

Ask a group member or members to read aloud.

PASSAGE SUMMARY

- Paul is brought before the Jewish council (Sanhedrin) to clarify the accusations against him.
- Tension erupts between the Pharisees and Sadducees.
- Paul boldly proclaims his belief in the resurrection.
- The argument becomes so intense soldiers intervene.
- That night, Jesus personally encourages Paul and confirms his mission.

Emphasize that Paul is both legally and spiritually under pressure.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What details stand out to you in this story?

Paul's boldness, the division among leaders, Jesus appearing to Paul, the escalating conflict

How would you describe the atmosphere in the council meeting?

Hostile, tense, divided, unstable

What risks did Paul take by speaking openly about his faith?

Physical harm, further imprisonment, loss of reputation, increased opposition

Why do you think Paul remained bold despite the danger?

Confidence in God's calling, trust in God's sovereignty, deep conviction about the gospel

What does Jesus say to Paul in verse 11, and why is it significant?

Jesus encourages him, confirms his mission to Rome, reassures him that God is in control

What does this reveal about God's presence during hardship?

God is near, not distant, He strengthens us, He reminds us of our purpose

Highlight that God often speaks most clearly in our hardest moments.

Where do adults today feel pressure to hide or soften their faith?

Workplace, extended family, social circles, online spaces

What fears keep us from living boldly for Christ?

Rejection, conflict, career consequences, being misunderstood

What area of your life may God be asking you to trust Him more fully?

Relationships, finances, career decisions, personal habits

APPLICATION

How might your faith influence your workplace, family, or community?

Leading with integrity, showing grace, standing for truth, serving others

How can this group support one another in courageous obedience?

Prayer, accountability, encouragement, sharing victories and struggles

CLOSING THOUGHT

Paul didn't know exactly what the future held—but he trusted the God who did. Even in uncertainty and danger, Jesus met him with encouragement. The same is true for us. When we stand firm in faith, God stands with us. Courage doesn't mean the absence of fear—it means obedience in spite of it.

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LOOKING AHEAD

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

March 8, 2026 — Acts 23:12–35

Next week we'll see a dangerous plot against Paul and how God protects him through unexpected people and circumstances.

Consider:

- How does God work behind the scenes?
- What does this teach us about trust?
- Where do you need to rely on God's protection?

PRAYER FOCUS

- **Courage to follow Jesus boldly** even when it's uncomfortable.
- **Strength for believers** facing pressure in work and family settings.
- **Transformation in our community**—homes, schools, and workplaces.

- **Wisdom to make godly decisions** in a confusing culture.
- **Boldness to share our faith** with those around us.
- **For Our Worship Services** – Pray specifically for the **invitation portion** of our services:
 - that **hearts would be open**,
 - the **Holy Spirit would move**,
 - and people would **respond obediently** to God’s leading.

COMMENTARY

Acts 22:30-23:11

23:1. We already know Paul has been brought to the Sanhedrin by Claudius Lysias. We are as surprised as they when, rather than waiting for some invitation, Paul immediately begins speaking. He used the common formal address for assembled Jews and affirmed his commitment to godly duty as a Jew (Rom. 15:19b; Phil. 3:6b; 2 Tim. 1:4–7). As innocent as this line may seem, we must understand it in light of what the Sanhedrin knew full well about this man from Tarsus: an outspoken Christian, totally convinced of the messiahship of Jesus.

23:2. Ananias, son of Nedebaeus, was appointed priest in A.D. 48 and held that office for approximately ten years. Famous for bribery and plunder of temple offerings, he was assassinated by Jewish guerrillas in A.D. 66. His order to strike Paul on the mouth was illegal since, before the Sanhedrin as before our own western courts of law, the prisoner was innocent until proven guilty.

23:3. Paul’s response astonishes us as much as Ananias’ order. We look for Paul to act like Jesus: “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats” (1 Pet. 2:23). Instead, Paul spoke the truth prophetically (though probably not consciously on this occasion), for God did smite Ananias. The phrase whitewashed wall accused Ananias of hypocrisy (Matt. 23:27).

23:4-5. We can infer from Luke’s remark about those who were standing near Paul that the high priest sat some distance away. Seventy-one people in addition to Paul would have occupied the room if all the Council showed up for this hastily-called meeting. Upon being challenged regarding his words, Paul retreats to his opening line and calls the Council, Brothers, once again. He explains his behavior by saying, I did not realize that he was the high priest. The question of why Paul did not know Ananias was high priest is much debated.

23:6-8. Time to change tactics. Exchanging ill behavior with the high priest would achieve nothing in the Sanhedrin. Paul knew the group’s makeup, since he had once been part of it. The controlling Sadducees (including Ananias) were constantly besieged by the Pharisees, particularly on the issue of the resurrection. If Paul could create a doctrinal civil war, he might divert attention away from himself to an ongoing internal debate. For the third time Paul addresses the group as brothers. This time he states his

sterling religious credentials: I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. Then he cuts to the bottom line—the resurrection. Some argue that Paul could no longer have called himself a Pharisee because he spent his life spreading the gospel to Gentiles.

23:9-10. A minority group of the Sanhedrin argued vigorously for Paul's release. In the latter part of verse 9 we find out why Luke raised the point of angels and spirits in verse 8. Either he has not given us a full account of the discussion up to this point, or these Pharisees have already heard the story of Paul's Damascus Road experience. In the spirit of Gamaliel (Acts 5:39), they warn of the possibility that a spirit or an angel has spoken to him. Obviously, that enraged the Sadducees even more, and the meeting became complete bedlam. In the typical pattern of the Sanhedrin, they could not contain their arguments in words alone and apparently pulled at Paul from two sides until Lysias intervened and had him taken back to the barracks.

23:11. Not that night, but the night following the next day Paul experienced the fourth of five visions he received in Acts (16:9; 18:9–10; 22:17–21; 27:23–24). This message emphasized God's control over all these events and offered courage. Mainly, Jesus informed Paul that these trial appearances have not been defenses for his life, but rather witness of the truth. Furthermore, this witness would continue all the way to Rome.