



# LIFE Group Discussion Guide

March 8, 2026

Acts 23:12-35

## 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 had someone step in to help you when you didn't expect it? What happened?

Sometimes God works in loud, obvious ways—and sometimes He works quietly through people making brave choices behind the scenes. In this story, God protects Paul through a family member speaking up and a soldier taking quick action.

Think about this: *Have you ever realized later that God was helping you when you didn't notice it at the time?*

## SCRIPTURE

Read **Acts 23:12–35** together. Encourage students to listen for how many different people God uses in the story.

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## **PASSAGE SUMMARY**

Paul's enemies make a serious plan to kill him, but God steps in using Paul's nephew and a Roman officer to keep Paul safe. Even when Paul can't do anything himself, God is still working to protect him and keep His promises moving forward.

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## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Why do you think the group of men were so determined to stop Paul (vv. 12–15)? What does this show about how some people react to the truth about Jesus?**

They felt threatened by Paul's message and were angry that people were turning to Jesus. Sometimes truth challenges people's pride, beliefs, or control, and they respond with hostility instead of humility.

**What stands out to you about Paul's nephew and the choice he makes (vv. 16–22)? Why was his courage important?**

He spoke up even though it could have been scary. God used his bravery to protect Paul, showing that even young or ordinary people can make a big difference when they do the right thing.

**How does the Roman commander respond to the danger (vv. 23–24, 31–35)? What does this tell us about how God can use unexpected people?**

The commander acts quickly and seriously to keep Paul safe. Even though he wasn't a believer, God used him to accomplish His plan.

**Earlier, Jesus promised Paul that he would share the gospel in Rome (Acts 23:11). How do you see God keeping that promise in this story?**

God protects Paul and moves him closer to Rome. Even when things look dangerous, God is still guiding events to fulfill what He promised.

**The men thought they were doing the right thing by stopping Paul. How can people sometimes convince themselves that wrong actions are okay?**

When people let anger, pride, or fear control them, they may justify bad choices. That's why it's important to follow God's Word and seek wisdom.

**Paul doesn't fight back or escape on his own—others help him. What does this teach us about trusting God when we feel powerless?**

Sometimes trusting God means waiting and letting Him work through others. We don't always have to fix everything ourselves.

**What part of this story encourages you the most about God's protection and care?**

God sees danger before Paul does and already has a plan in motion, reminding us that He is always ahead of our situations.

**How can this passage help you trust God more when life feels uncertain or stressful?**

It shows that God is always working, even when we can't see it, and that His promises never fail.

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## **APPLICATION**

**Where might God be asking you to be brave and do the right thing this week?**

**How can you remind yourself to trust God when you feel worried or out of control?**

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## **DIG DEEPER**

**Why do you think God often uses ordinary people to accomplish big things?**

**What promises from God help you feel secure when life is hard?**

**How can prayer help you trust God's plan more fully?**

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## **CLOSING THOUGHT**

God doesn't stop working just because we feel stuck, scared, or unsure. In this story, Paul is protected not by his own strength but by God's unseen hand moving through people around him. The same God is at work in your life today, even when you don't notice it yet.

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## **LOOKING AHEAD**

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

**March 15, 2026 — Acts 24:1–27**

Next week we will study **Acts 24:1–27**, where Paul stands trial before Felix and continues to share his faith even while waiting.

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## **PRAYER FOCUS**

- Thank God for always working behind the scenes to protect and guide us.
- Pray for courage to do what's right, even when it's hard.

- Pray specifically for the invitation portion of our worship services—that hearts would be open, the Spirit would move powerfully, and people would respond in obedient faith.

## COMMENTARY

### Acts 23:12-35

**23:12-15.** The radical Jews took an oath not to eat or drink until Paul was dead. This kind of oath in Jewish custom carried wording such as: “May God do to us the same and more” or perhaps: “May we be cursed if” Paul was no stranger to such plots (9:24; 20:19). They went to the chief priests and elders. Avoiding the minority Pharisees who had spoken in Paul’s behalf, they approached Ananias and his cohorts to involve them in this “pretext.” Though Luke does not specifically say so, the passage intimates strongly that the Sanhedrin hierarchy agreed and, thereby, entered into a murder conspiracy with anarchists.

**23:16-22.** Any plot so well known in the city had little chance of success. We get the impression from Paul’s letters that family ties had been broken (Phil. 3:8), but such connections do not die easily. Furthermore (the forty henchmen notwithstanding), preservation of life was the greatest value in Judaism. So God used a hitherto unknown nephew as an agent of deliverance. The mention of this nephew is all we know of Paul’s family.

**23:23-24.** At 9:00 p.m. under cover of darkness, 470 Roman soldiers escort Paul to the provincial capital at Caesarea, headquarters of Governor Felix. The Romans were nothing if not efficient. Lysias called up two centurions with their two hundred infantry, seventy cavalry troops and two hundred dexioboloi, a fascinating word which appears only here in the New Testament. Obviously it means “spearman,” but it comes from a root meaning “right-handed” because in the Roman army spears were commonly thrown with the right hand. Some scholars scoff at this account because of the overkill escort, but Lysias would take no more chances with these Jewish anarchists.

**23:25-30.** How could Luke possibly have known the content of private and official correspondence between a Roman commander and the procurator of Judea? Of course, he could not; that is why verse 25 says, He wrote a letter as follows. Luke’s summary obviously came from Paul who also only learned it from whatever Felix revealed in the questioning of chapter 24.

**23:31-33.** This is the third time Paul sneaked out of a city at night. The foot soldiers stopped at Antipatris, doubtless resting there for awhile before returning to the barracks. On his horse, Paul accompanied the cavalry all the way to Caesarea, about sixty miles from Jerusalem and thirty miles northwest of Antipatris.