

ALWAYS READY. ?!

THE CALL TO GOSPEL READINESS

A Study of the Book of Acts
*With an Emphasis on the Biblical Mandates
of Evangelism & Discipleship*

Sermon Series & Small Group Curriculum Guide
Fall 2024 | Spring 2025

Always Ready?! The Call to Gospel Readiness
Written by David Holcomb
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But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always** being **ready** to make a defense to anyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.

- 1 PETER 3:15

Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of **the gospel** I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

- 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-4

And he (Jesus) said to them, "**Go** into all the world and **proclaim** the gospel to the whole creation."

- MARK 16:1

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FOREWORD

The apostle Paul tells us that we are God's "workmanship," created in Christ to walk in "good works" which God has prepared for us to do. At the heart of these good works is the privilege of spreading the gospel and helping others grow in faith.

As Christians, one of the greatest joys we can experience is leading someone else to faith in Jesus. Seeing a new believer grow in faith and begin to reach others multiplies that joy.

Our *Always Ready* study is designed to help each of us become more confident in sharing the message of the gospel. We'll focus on knowing the message, but also on how to engage people in gospel conversations in a non-threatening way. We'll also provide guidance on how to help new believers grow in faith. Our goal is not merely to make converts, but to make disciples as Jesus has commanded us.

Our biblical focus will be the Book of Acts. Acts provides patterns for ministry from the early Christian church. So effective was the evangelism and discipleship of the early believers that their adversaries described them as those "*who have turned the world upside down.*" (Acts 17:6)

Importantly, we should keep in mind that the fruitfulness of the early church was not based in human reasoning or strategy, but on the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's power is available to us today as we seek to fulfill Jesus' call to be His witnesses. (Acts 1:8)

As we begin this study, may we have a fresh appreciation for the simplicity and beauty of the gospel. May we be strengthened in our resolve to help others grow to know God better and love Him more. And may we know the joy of being used by the Holy Spirit to bring others to our Savior.

In Christ,

David Beaty

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Beaty".

Senior Pastor, River Oaks Community Church

INTRODUCTION - USING THE GUIDE

Always Ready.?!

It is more than a statement. It is less of a question? It is the exclamation of a life on mission! *Always Ready.?!* is an all-consuming pursuit of readiness as it relates to the inseparable biblical mandates of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and growing unto Christlike maturity. Also known as evangelism and discipleship.

In Scripture, these foundational attributes of the Christian life are seen as two sides of the same coin. On one side is an intentional readiness to receive, articulate, and share the gospel of Jesus Christ. On the other side, an intentional readiness to become, grow, and come alongside others as a follower of Jesus Christ.

Put another way, the sharing of the Gospel is a mark of one who follows Jesus, and a follower of Jesus is one committed to the sharing of the Gospel. Inseparable.

With this in mind, the *Always Ready* study has been developed with the goal of generating a greater sense of churchwide readiness. Ultimately, through the work of the Holy Spirit, this readiness will result in an extended season of changed hearts, evident in both the lives of believers and the world for which they are sent.

Importantly, *Always Ready* emphasizes a progression from learning and discussing in the first part of the study, to implementing and acting in part two. As such, it allows for anyone to enter in and experience real growth regardless of their current level of biblical knowledge, spiritual maturity, or discipleship experience.

In other words, this study is intended to be equally accessible, helpful, and challenging to everyone. After all, whether a matter of salvation to unbelievers or biblical obedience to believers, the question of “are you ready” must be considered.

Source Materials: The study is built around the **Acts of the Apostles**, a historical record accounting for the first three decades of the early church. In Acts, we see a model of the Church whose response to the Great Commission (to go, teach, make disciples – Matthew 28:19-20), resulted in an unmatched multiplication of believers and widespread advancement of the Christian faith.

A significant theme to Acts is how genuine discipleship works itself out practically in the life of the Church. Most notable are the many examples of genuine belief and conviction leading to missional living. Early believers were always ready to share

the good news of Jesus Christ (evangelism) and always ready to live a life worthy of the testimony of that good news (discipleship).

To aid in our study, weekly units provide conversation prompts taken from the selected Acts passage and Sunday teaching. These questions provide for a general understanding of the Acts narrative and guide our response to God's Word.

However, most questions are intended to connect Acts with the principles of sharing the gospel and growing in discipleship. This connection will include references to two additional sources – *Multiply*, by Francis Chan, and the *3 Circles Gospel Sharing Tool*, developed by Pastor Jimmy Scroggins and distributed by the NAMB.

Multiply is utilized in most units as an element of the curriculum. It is meant to reinforce the foundational principle that “*we were made to make disciples.*” The first half focuses on the fundamentals – who is a disciple, how to study the Bible, what is the Church? The second half walks sequentially through the redemptive, good news gospel story of Scripture, from Creation to a New Heaven & Earth.

The key to utilizing the selected chapters and questions from *Multiply* is to do so with an eye to equipping in discipleship in order to go in evangelism, while witnessing the effect of evangelism that leads to the need for discipleship. In short, in one way or another, followers in Jesus Christ are “*made to make disciples.*” ***Multiply is an equipping element of Always Ready.***

Alongside Acts and *Multiply*, most units include aspects of *3 Circles* training. This simple method of turning everyday conversations into gospel conversations will be taught and practiced often, with additional resources provided. On the following page is an explanation to why *3 Circles* was chosen and ways to explore it more. ***3 Circles is an evangelism element of Always Ready.***

How To: The suggested approach to this workbook is to view it as a curriculum guide, with each week presenting a collection of cohesive assignments, questions, and resources, all intended to address one or more of the overriding initiatives - knowing, articulating, sharing the gospel, and becoming, maturing in, and coming alongside others in discipleship.

Ultimately, *Always Ready* will prove to be most impactful and fruitful when:

- The weekly Acts passage is read, understood, and discussed.
- The pages in *Multiply* are read, questions are answered, and preparation made for group discussion.

- The 3 *Circles* conversation tool is learned and practiced.
- The key Scripture verse is reflected on daily.
- The gospel is known, articulated, and shared. To this, a gospel overview is provided below as the response to 1 Peter 3:15 and the reason for our hope. Throughout the study, the gospel will be taught and reinforced churchwide until it is heard and known by all. Training and mid-size events will be used to assist in articulation and sharing.

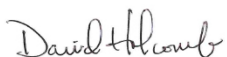
Above all, this new season of mission and ministry will be most life-changing when all who call this local church home are committed to praying for the readiness to share the Gospel and cultivate a disciple making culture.

Together, we can (we must) ***always*** be ***ready*** to make a defense (give a logical answer) to anyone who asks us the reason for the hope that is in us, and to do it with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). That reason is ***the gospel of Jesus Christ***; the only reason for hope and the only hope that gives reason.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is ...

God created us to be in relationship with him, in his presence. This was his design. But in our disobedience (sin) we were removed from his holy presence and left in a state of brokenness, separated from God. Yet in his infinite love for us, he put in motion a plan of reconciliation, a way in which rebellious beings could be restored into his intended relationship. That plan was to send his Son, of himself, to be fully Divine and fully human. Because only a holy One could possibly pay the penalty for (atone for) the sin transgression against God, and only a human one could truly represent the transgressors before God. Jesus was that One/one. He was born, lived, taught, and died (all according to the Scriptures and prophecies), and his death was the substitute punishment for the guilty, you and me. He was buried and in three days he arose from death into life. His resurrection secured victory over death and made a way for humanity (you and me) to be restored in relationship with God. That way is to confess with our heart that Jesus is Lord of our life (turning from all other lords) and genuinely believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. In this, eternal salvation is assured, and presence restored in the original intended relationship with God, in part for now, but as was originally designed for all eternity. The gospel.

Because He lives,
David Holcomb



Discipleship Pastor, River Oaks Community Church



The 3 Circles

Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations

One of the main resources used in *Always Ready* is the *3 Circles* gospel sharing tool. It is a simple, teachable, reproducible conversation starter that is highly relational and able to be contextualized for every kind of person and setting. In fact, it can be presented with equal clarity and completeness in both formal situations (whiteboards and classrooms) and informal ones (smartphones or the back of a napkin).

Why this particular tool when so many other good ones are available? Or why not encourage everyone to create their own framework for entering into a gospel conversation? Great questions, and Bob Stauffer of the EPC National Church Health Team provides a helpful explanation:

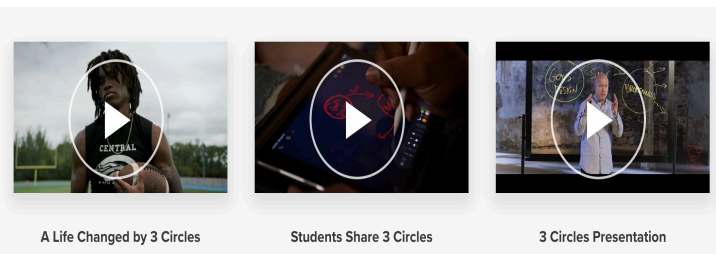
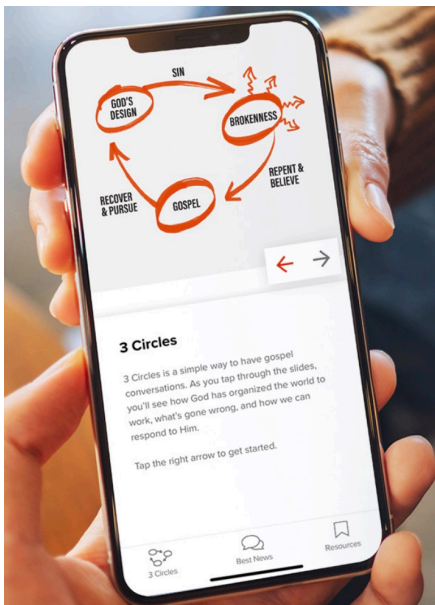
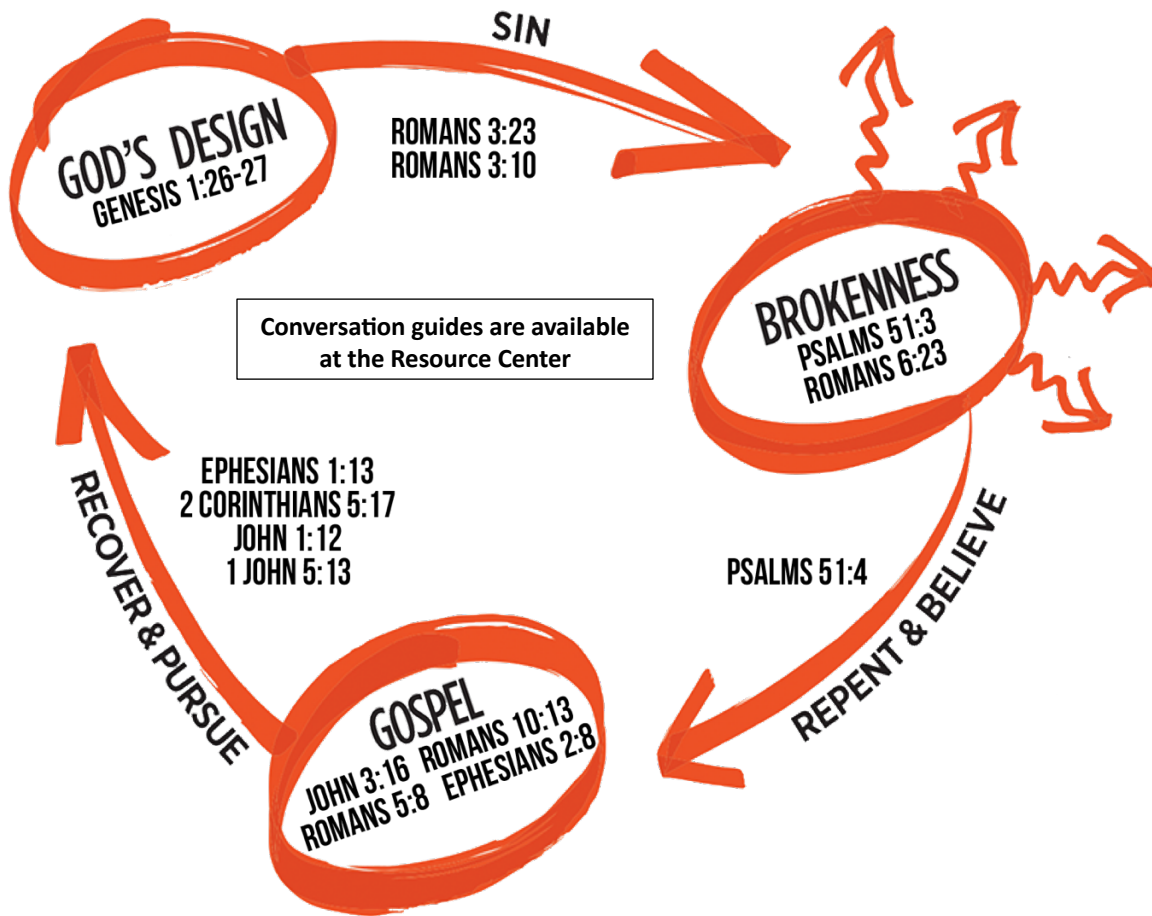
Great evangelistic movements have developed simple “gospeling” tools that are adaptable, visual, and teachable. Tools that even a brand-new believer can grasp and share with others right away. When leaders intentionally and repeatedly train others to use these tools, they stick with it.

So, the question might be, why do we encourage all EPC churches to pursue training and utilization of 3 Circles as opposed to other tools? Well, in no small part, it’s because of how the explanation of the gospel is presented through the lens of: God’s Design, Sin’s Entrance and Resulting Brokenness, and the Solution of Jesus Christ (his birth, death, resurrection) as a means to recover and pursue God’s Design.

This language of design, brokenness, and redemption by the power of the gospel echoes the ideas which Reformed thinkers and missional-minded believers have articulated for centuries when explaining the Good News of Jesus with the language of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration.

3 Circles has proven to be an engaging and effective tool across the US and around the globe. We encourage all of our churches to employ it as the common tool in their gospel sharing communities for God’s glory and for His Kingdom.

On the following page, please take a moment to scan the QR Code for more 3 Circles resources, including access to an app and example presentations.



Scan the QR code for access to more resources.

PART ONE

Units 1 – 11

(1 Peter 3, John 3, Acts 1 – Acts 9)

Gospel Sharing

3 Circles Training & Practice

Disciple Making

***Multiply* (Fundamentals: Parts 1-3)**

UNIT ONE

Always Ready to Give an Answer (1 Peter 3:8-18)

But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being ready to make a defense to anyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect. – 1 Peter 3:15

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read 1 Peter 3:8-18 / Reflect Daily on 1 Peter 3:15
- Review “Foreword & How to Use” (*Multiply*, pp. 7-14)
- Watch GenSend’s *3 Circles Overview* Video via QR —————→



PURPOSE: The first of two introductory units before arriving in the book of Acts is intended to emphasize the theme passage and spiritual posture of *Always Ready*.?!

Readiness for gospel sharing and disciple making is the charge to all followers of Jesus. In exploring the context and meaning of 1 Peter 3:15, believers should be encouraged to live out its instructions each day, and to do so with the attributes Peter describes in the verses before and after the key verse.

Readers are asked to reflect on their own readiness (preparedness, willingness, desire) to present the gospel message. Equally important, readers are challenged to reflect on their life witness attractiveness, which is key to Peter’s message on why others would even inquire of “the hope that is in you.”

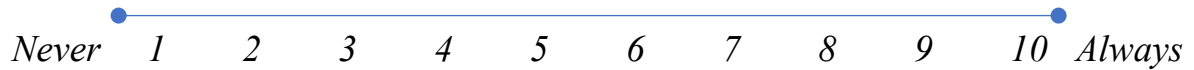
In other words, does my life, in words and deeds, give reason for anyone to ask me why I have hope in Jesus? More simply, am I living different enough, Christ-like enough, that my life is appealing to unbelievers? Or do I appear no different than the world around me, living a life that is unappealing and off-putting to unbelievers?

This unit will also introduce the resource *Multiply*. While not the focus of this study, most units will utilize *Multiply* to supplement and emphasize the biblical passage and the dual mandates of gospel sharing and disciple making.

Finally, an introduction to the *3 Circles* gospel conversation tool. Future units will walk through this tool step-by-step. At this point, a basic familiarity is the goal.

PONDER

1. How “**ready**” are you to share the gospel? Place a mark on the scale.


Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Always

- Why did you answer as you did?

2. The historical context of 1 Peter is that of persecution against Christians in Rome. With that in mind, what surprises you most about these instructions?
3. In 1 Peter 3:15, what are the three distinct instructions the Apostle Peter gives believers to live as effective and missional witnesses in the world?
4. What is the “hope” Peter is referring to? Do you have that hope in you?
5. Why would anyone “ask you” for a reason for the hope that is in you?
6. Why would anyone “**NOT** ask you” for a reason for the hope that is in you?
7. How does Peter connect the life of a believer to the gospel in 1 Peter 3:16-18?

PUT INTO ACTION

- How “**ready**” would you like to be for sharing the gospel? Place a mark.

Never  1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Always

- Which of the following (circle one or more) are you most desiring over this next season of your faith journey? Pray over, ask others to pray with you.

The Gospel ... **to Know** **to Articulate** **to Share w/ Others**

Discipleship ... **to Become** **to Mature In** **to Disciple Others**

- After reading the introduction to *Multiply*, what resonates with you? Record your thoughts and discuss with at least one other person; a family member, friend, or in a group.

- After viewing the *3 Circles* overview video, what intrigues you most about engaging in a gospel conversation? What intimidates you most? Download the app and have it available for future training and conversations.

Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. – 2 Timothy 4:2

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT TWO

Always Ready to Explain the Gospel (John 3:1-21)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” – John 3:16

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- **Read John 3:1-21 / Reflect Daily on John 3:16**
- **Review “What is a Disciple” (*Multiply*, pp. 15-25)**
- **Watch TVC-FM’s *The Gospel in 90 Seconds* via QR →**
- **Learn Step One of 3 Circles – God’s Design**



PURPOSE: The final introductory unit before settling into the book of Acts is intended to emphasize the gospel as the answer, or defense, of the reason for the hope that is in us.

Many professing Christians are not confident in answering the most fundamental question of the Christian faith: *What is the gospel of Jesus Christ?*

Some believers, especially new believers, simply don’t know or understand the full gospel, and that provides an opportunity for more mature followers of Jesus to disciple them with an aim of Christ-like maturity and gospel understanding.

However, some professing believers only know or believe in part, often creating an untrue and misleading gospel understanding which can lead to a dangerous theology in many biblical essentials. For that reason, the true and complete gospel must be central to a genuine confession, repentance, and belief.

Unit two is the beginning of a year-long, purposed effort to ensure everyone has access to the full understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ and can articulate it in complete fashion. There will be sample definitions (all of them contain certain necessary elements) and opportunities to reinforce one’s understanding.

Finally, in terms of disciple making, unit two utilizes the opening chapter of *Multiply*, focusing on the topic of becoming a disciple of Jesus. Additionally, the first step of the 3 Circles presentation is reviewed.

PONDER

1. Finish the following in your words as you can articulate it today.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is

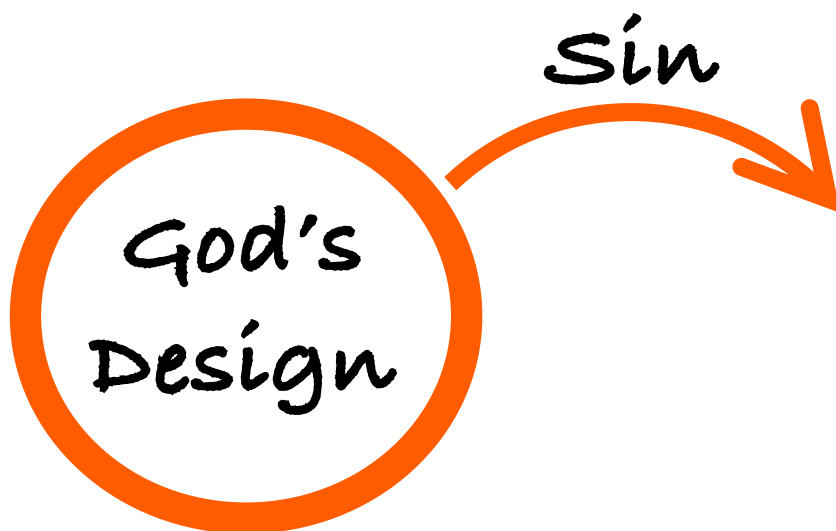
2. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, the Apostle Paul includes three necessary elements of the gospel narrative, list them below? Did you include each in your definition?
3. For the gospel to be good news, it is important to know “why” God had to give his only Son. According to God’s plan why did Jesus have to die on our account? (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23a).
4. For the gospel to be complete in one’s life, how is it received? (Romans 10:9-11).
5. In John 3:1-21, Jesus shares the way to salvation with Nicodemus. How does Jesus imply that his death would be a sacrifice for sin and a path to restoration with God? How does that address what genuine “belief” in Jesus means?
6. One of the major misunderstandings for receiving the gospel is how salvation is earned or not earned. In *Multiply*, read (pp. 17-19) and answer *Q2 (p. 19)* regarding Ephesians 2:1-10.

PUT INTO ACTION

- Do you have a clear understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ (aka, the gospel, the good news)? If not, reach out to a group leader, elder, or pastor. Also, see the sample definition in the introduction section of this study guide.

If you do understand the gospel of Jesus Christ, articulate it to another believer in your life with a thought to clarity, conciseness, and completeness.

- I articulated the gospel of Jesus Christ to: _____.
- 3 Circles Moment – **Circle #1, God's Design**. Discuss with a group.



The Bible tells us that **God's original design** was a world in which his creation (you and me) lived perfectly in relationship with him. We were made to worship him and enjoy his pleasure, his closeness, forever. There was no brokenness.

And God saw everything he had made, and behold, it was good. – Genesis 1:31

However, the Bible also tells us that his created beings (humanity) disobeyed God out of selfish pride. The word for that disobedience is **sin**. It meant that God could no longer be in perfect relationship with us. We would be separated from God in this world and in eternity; because a holy God cannot exist in the presence of an unholy people. The world was now broken, marked by death and decay.

None is righteous, no, not one; no one seeks for God. – Romans 3:10

For all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God. – Romans 3:23

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT THREE

Always Ready to Wait on the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-14, 2:1-11)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” – Acts 1:8

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 1 – 2:11 / Reflect Daily on Acts 1:8
- Review “Command to Make Disciples” (*Multiply*, 27-38)
- Watch Radical’s *Radical Discipleship* via the QR →
- Learn Step Two of 3 Circles – Brokenness



PURPOSE: Unit three marks the start to an in-depth study of the biblical book of Acts, or as often referred, the Acts of the Apostles.

For a series developed with the purpose of sharing the gospel and making disciples, the book of Acts provides many examples of believers living out these mandates as the initial response to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

From beginning to end, Acts encourages believers of every time and place through the acts of early followers of Jesus who demonstrated a readiness to go, obey, come alongside, and share the gospel in all circumstances and situations.

The purpose of unit three is to make clear that evangelism and disciple making are only fruitful when fully dependent on the Holy Spirit. While equipping with gospel sharing tools and developing discipleship strategies are important for missional preparedness, it is **always** the power of the Holy Spirit that is to be trusted for convicting and converting hearts and minds with the gospel.

Trusting in the Holy Spirit is also critical to fulfilling the Great Commission, which is the emphasis in chapter two of *Multiply*, as discussed on this unit’s video clip.

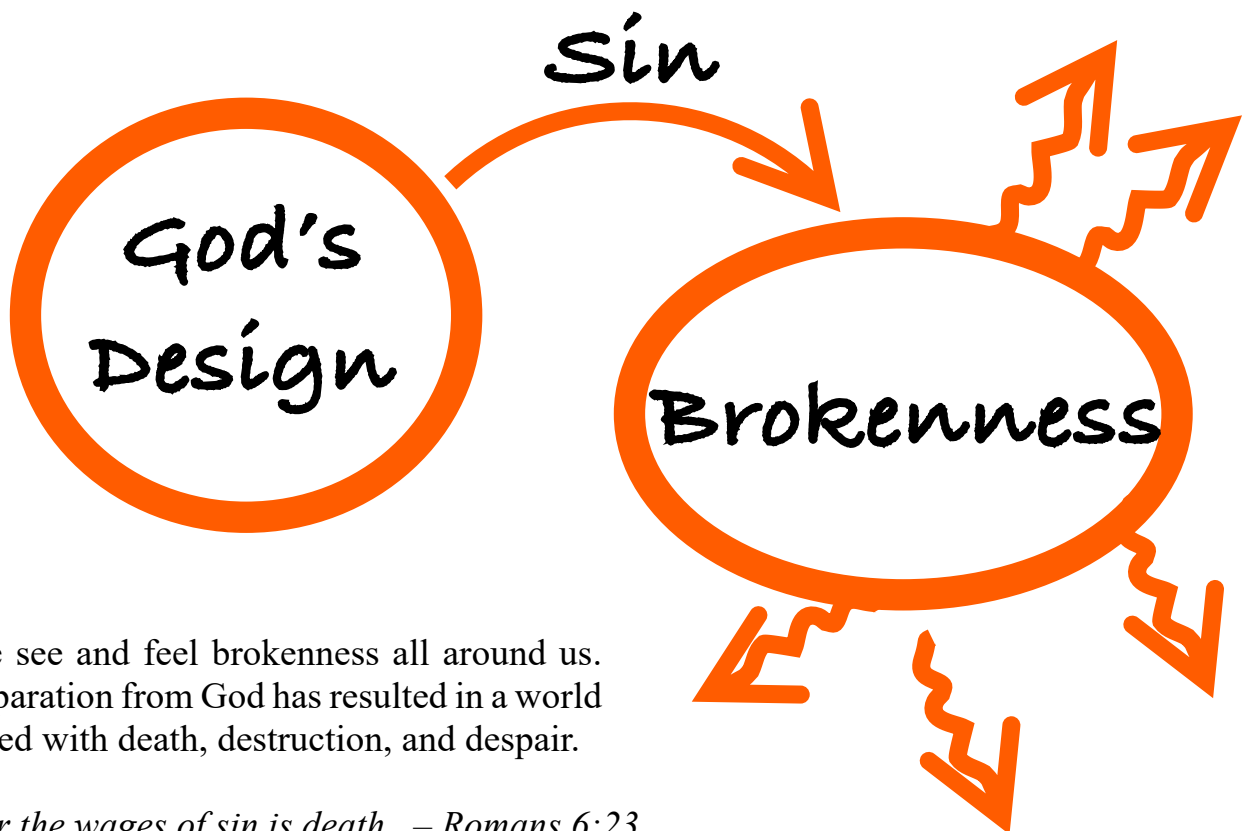
Lastly, the second of 3 Circles is put into action with an overview of brokenness, an aspect of the world for which everyone can relate and agree.

PONDER

1. After commanding his followers to be about evangelism and discipleship (the Great Commission, Matthew 28:16-20), Acts 1:1-4 issues a command that seems to take priority over the Great Commission. What was this final instruction?
2. Who and what were the disciples waiting on before they would go out as Jesus had instructed? (Acts 1:6-11). What does this teach us about God?
3. Do believers still have access to the power of the Holy Spirit? Why or why not? Consider the following: Romans 8:9, Ephesians 1:13-14, 1 Corinthians 6:19.
4. Do you trust in the power of the Holy Spirit? What would you need to be always ready to depend on the Holy Spirit in obedience to the Great Commission?
5. Do you take rejection personally when it comes to sharing the gospel with others? Do you take acceptance pridefully when it comes to sharing the gospel with others? How can the lessons of this unit be applied to both scenarios?
6. Relying on the Spirit can encourage and emboldened us in Kingdom ministry, as can being equipped in the Spirit's power and joining with others on mission. In *Multiply*, read (pp. 34-37) and answer *Q5* (p. 35) & *Q7* (p. 37).

PUT INTO ACTION

- To continue preparing for an always ready response with the gospel, take a sheet of paper and write out a clear, concise, and complete definition of the gospel. Share your definition with another believer (family, friend, small group member) and explain why you are gifting them this good news.
- I gave a written description of the gospel to: _____.
- 3 Circles Moment – **Circle #2, Brokenness.** Discuss with a group.



We see and feel brokenness all around us. Separation from God has resulted in a world filled with death, destruction, and despair.

For the wages of sin is death. – Romans 6:23

For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together. – Romans 8:22

In our humanity, when we realize life is not working, we look for a way to fix that brokenness. We go in many directions, looking for healing in money, relationships, addictions, possessions, worldly pleasures, and more. But we never get out of brokenness, all of these things ultimately snap us back into our broken world.

There is a way that seems to be right, but its end leads to death. – Proverbs 14:12

They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served something created instead of the creator. – Romans 1:25

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT FOUR

Always Ready to Rely on the Whole Counsel of Scripture (Acts 2:14-36)

“I say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day ... he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, his flesh did not see corruption.” – Acts 2:29...32

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- **Read Acts 2:14-36 / Reflect Daily on Acts 2:29-32**
- **Review “Studying Logically” (*Multiply*, 123-138)**
- **Learn Step Three of 3 Circles – The Gospel**

PURPOSE: Unit four utilizes the Apostle Peter’s Day of Pentecost sermon to demonstrate the importance of relying on God’s Word to share the message of Jesus.

While it is true that the New Testament had not yet been written during the time of the early church, it does not mean it has since replaced the Old Testament. Rather, it has completed the full canon, or whole counsel, of God’s authoritative Word.

From Genesis to Revelation, the sixty-six books of the Bible, collectively as one gospel narrative, informs its reader of God’s character, the response of God’s people as a result of God’s character, and God’s plan of redeeming his creation (the Gospel).

In Acts 2, Peter draws from the Old Testament to teach of God’s plan. This would be the model of Paul’s teaching, and often that of Jesus when speaking of himself.

This unit should stress the importance of being ready with Scripture for evangelism and disciple making. But also, it should encourage believers to have confidence in the power of Scripture. It will not be clever words that brings about salvation, but the inspired Word of God to speak to the hearts and minds of unbelievers.

As to the *Multiply* resource, this unit will provide a high-level overview of how to study and interpret Scripture with context. This is especially helpful for new believers as well as spiritually mature believers coming alongside others.

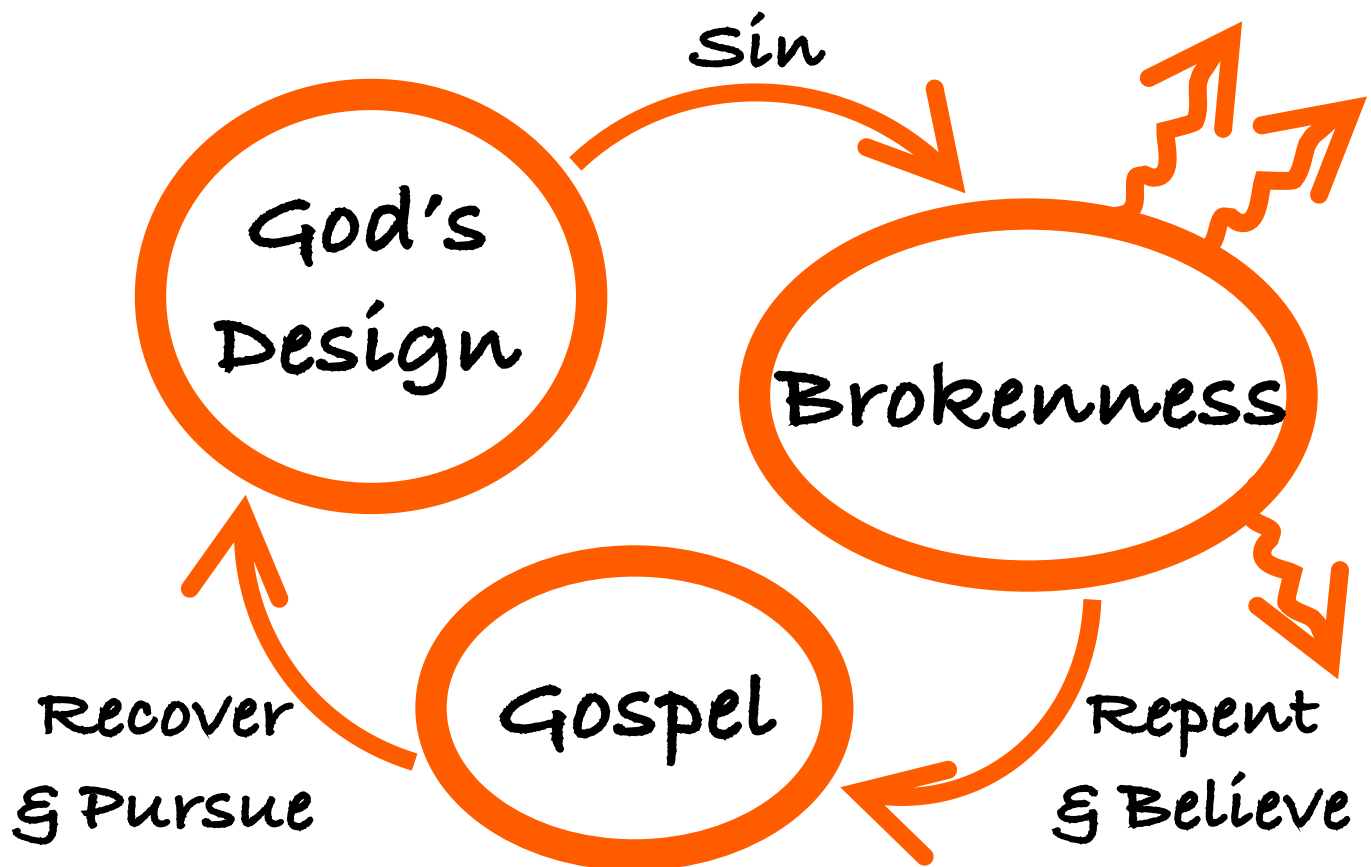
Lastly, the final circle explanation of the 3 Circles tool makes the transition from brokenness to the Gospel, and the way of returning to God’s Design.

PONDER

1. If you were asked to present the gospel of Jesus Christ by way of Old Testament (OT) Scripture alone, are you ready with any specific passages? Do you think it is still necessary to use OT references when Gospel accounts of the New Testament are available? Why or why?
2. After what occurs in Acts 2:14 does Peter begin to speak? Why is this important?
3. Peter uses the prophet Joel's words as a reference to both the future Kingdom fulfillment (Acts 2:17) and a present fulfillment (Acts 2:21). Why do you think Peter started with this proclamation? Notice where he takes the sermon next ...
4. To supplement his testimony of Jesus in Acts 2:22-35, Peter uses the words of King David (Psalms 16 & 110) and an account from 2 Samuel 7:11-16. What do these Old Testament references provide to the testimony? How do they help your own understanding? Do you notice elements of the gospel in the words of David?
5. To hide God's Word in our hearts (Psalm 119:11), so that we might be always ready to share it and disciple others with it, we need to ensure we are growing in our own study and understanding. In *Multiply*, read (pp. 123-128) and answer *Q1* (p. 126) & *Q2* (p. 128).

PUT INTO ACTION

- 3 Circles Moment – **Circle #3, The Gospel.** Discuss with a group.



In a broken state we realize the need for a greater remedy. We need the good news that God did not leave us without hope or a way out of brokenness. Jesus came to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. That way out is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.” – John 3:16
And those dead in their trespasses (sins), God made alive, forgiven the trespasses by cancelling the record of debt, by nailing it to the cross. – Colossians 2:13-14

This forgiveness is available to all who admit their sinful condition and their need for rescue. Those who trust only in Jesus and allow him to be Lord of their life will be assured of a future, eternal presence with God and filled with his Spirit today.

If you confess with your mouth that ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. – Romans 10:9-10
For it is God working in you, enabling you both to desire and to work out his good purpose. – Philippians 2:13

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT FIVE

Always Ready to Grow in Christian Community (Acts 2:42-47)

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. – Acts 2:42

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- **Read Acts 2:42-47 / Reflect Daily on Acts 2:42**
- **Review “Life in the Church” (*Multiply*, 51-64)**
- **Attend a 3 Circles Fellowship**

PURPOSE: Unit five is intended to encourage believers to live with a readiness for Christ-like community, as modeled by the early church.

Acts 2:42-47 paints a beautiful picture of how early believers fueled their calling to reach the world and make disciples, by regularly gathering around God’s Word, sharing their lives, observing the Lord’s Supper, and praying. It was “iron sharpening iron” in action (Proverbs 27:17).

Further, note the sequence of events in this passage, it appears to be an especially important order. Meaning, the disciples were first called to follow Jesus. They were then filled with the Holy Spirit. Next, they devoted themselves to worshipping and growing in Christian community. In this the Lord began “*adding to their number day by day those who were being saved*” (Acts 2:47).

This unit is purposed to highlight not only the need, but the command, for the fellowship of believers. There is no option in Scripture for growing and going in a vacuum, apart from other believers,

The *Multiply* resource will look at the importance of life in the local church. Coupled with the study of Acts, this material should prompt believers to reflect on their own devotion to coming together in order to be sent out to share the gospel, in order that the Lord might add to his number those who are being saved.

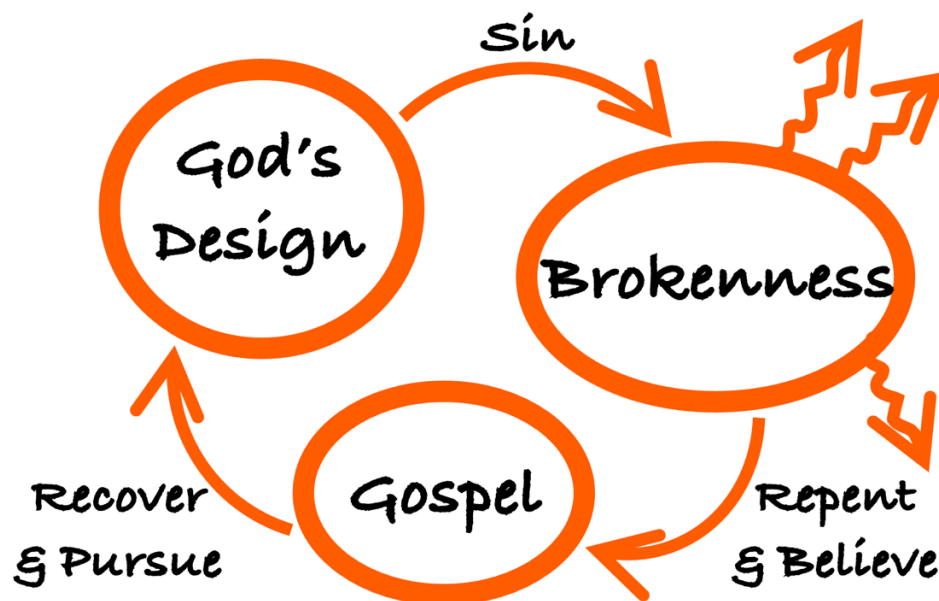
Finally, this week is **3 Circles Fellowship** week. These are gatherings hosted for the purpose of training in 3 Circles, experiencing fellowship, breaking of communion bread, and prayer. These events will replace normally scheduled group meetings.

PONDER

1. The Greek word for “fellowship” in Acts 2:42 is ***Koinonia***, it means “***sharing something in common.***” It is the shared partnership that brothers and sisters in Christ hold as their core identity and devotion, particularly when joined in community. What are your thoughts on Christian fellowship? Have you thought of it as optional or necessary? Why or why not?
2. How might the Lord use each of the discipleship activities presented in this passage as a means to more people being saved?
 - Teaching / Learning:
 - Fellowship / Sharing:
 - Breaking Bread / Communion:
 - Prayer:
 - Worship:
 - Hosting Meals:
3. Bible commentators suggest that “*having favor with all the people*” (Acts 2:47) means church members showed goodwill toward their neighbors by loving and serving them. In this, unbelievers were curious to know more, and many were saved. Do you “have favor” with all people? Why or why not?
4. While not the only way, the local church is a primary place God has established for his people to live out the example of Christian community. In ***Multiply***, read (pp. 51-56) and answer ***Q1*** (p. 54) & ***Q3*** (p. 56).

PUT INTO ACTION

- **3 Circles Fellowship Event** – In addition to 3 Circles training, there will be opportunities to share experiences, prayer, and encouragement with one another. Devote yourself to this time and may the Lord use it to add to his numbers those being saved.
- Having fully outlined the 3 Circles over the past three units, below are now a few suggestions for moving from **presentation** and **conversation**, to prayerfully, **transformation** through the Holy Spirit's convicting power. Also, if someone is not ready to genuinely receive the gospel then be ready to offer follow-up conversations with them if they are willing.



The gospel is the good news of God's plan to restore and reconcile us to himself. He has made a way to respond to him and immediately receive his promised salvation. You can talk to him using words like these:

- God, I know my life is broken and I recognize it is because of my sin and living for myself. I need you.
- I do believe Jesus lived, died, and was raised from the dead to rescue me from my sin and repair my relationship with you.
- Forgive me. I turn from my ways and put my trust in you. I know Jesus is my Lord and I will follow him from this day forward. Thank you.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. – Romans 10:3

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT SIX

Always Ready to Present Christ Crucified & Risen (Acts 3:11-28)

“But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.” – Acts 3:18

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 3:11-28 / Reflect Daily on Acts 3:18
- Review “Study the Bible Prayerfully” (*Multiply*, 109-121)
- Watch R.C. Sproul’s *Agony of the Cross* via the QR →



PURPOSE: Unit six will direct the eyes, attention, hearts, and minds of participants to the foot of the cross and the empty tomb. As Peter was ready to proclaim the suffering of Jesus, and God raising him from the dead, believers are to be always ready to present the cross and resurrection of Jesus as central to the gospel testimony.

In this passage (Acts 3:11-28), Peter is provided an opportunity to share the good news. He did not plan for this setting. He did not promote his messaging. He did not beg and plead for people to show up and hear him speak. God made an opportunity for which Peter was ready. He was attentive, so that when a crowd gathered around him, *“he saw it and addressed the people.”*

The objective of unit six is to ensure the cross and crucifixion of Jesus are fully understood, particularly as central to the redemptive plan of God transferring the penalty for sin from off of you and me and onto Jesus.

In **PUT INTO ACTION** for this unit is a well-known excerpt from Pastor Charles Spurgeon encouraging believers to keep the cross and resurrection of Jesus central to gospel sharing and disciple making. In fact, the cross and resurrection can be thought of as the filter for all of our words, deeds, thoughts, and worship.

The *Multiply* resource highlights an additional aspect of studying God’s Word, doing so prayerfully and obediently. Seeking the Holy Spirit’s guidance in times of Scripture study and meditation is critical to discovering and applying what God has intended. This is key to increasing our understanding of how the gospel – the life, cross, death, burial, resurrection, kingship – is a central theme throughout the Bible.

PONDER

1. What does the death and resurrection of Jesus mean to you? What happened on the cross, in your own words, as if asked by a curious new believer?
2. What is Peter speaking about in Acts 3:12-14? Why might it be said that these verses are rich in biblical and historical context?
3. What does Peter mean when he refers to Jesus as “*Author of life*” in Acts 3:15?
4. What key elements of the gospel do you find in Acts 3:15, 18, and 19?
5. The Apostle Paul would give a similar message on keeping the main thing, the main thing, when teaching and sharing the gospel. What are the examples of this in 1 Corinthians 1:23 and 2:2? Does this approach to teaching place limitations on teaching all of Scripture, or does it mean something different?
6. Early evangelists and disciple makers depended on God’s Word for effectiveness and power. The most impactful theologians, pastors, and believers ever since have as well. Readiness for sharing and coming alongside others requires a prayerful and obedient approach to God’s Word. In *Multiply*, read (pp. 112-118) and answer *Q4* (p. 114) & *Q6* (p. 117).

PUT INTO ACTION

Read and reflect on the following excerpt from Charles Spurgeon's 1895 book titled *Soul Winner, How to Lead Sinners to the Savior*.

On Preaching Christ –

“I believe that those sermons which are fullest of Christ are the most likely to be blessed to the conversion of the hearers. Let your sermons be full of Christ, from beginning to end crammed full of the gospel. As for myself, brethren, I cannot preach anything else but Christ and His cross, for I know nothing else, and long ago, like the apostle Paul, I determined not to know anything else save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. People have often asked me, “What is the secret of your success?” I always answer that I have no other secret but this, that I have preached the gospel, —not about the gospel, but the gospel, —the full, free, glorious gospel of the living Christ who is the incarnation of the good news. Preach Jesus Christ, brethren, always and everywhere; and every time you preach be sure to have much of Jesus Christ in the sermon.

You remember the story of the old minister who heard a sermon by a young man, and when he was asked by the preacher what he thought of it he was rather slow to answer, but at last he said, “If I must tell you, I did not like it at all; there was no Christ in your sermon.” “No,” answered the young man, “because I did not see that Christ was in the text.” “Oh!” said the old minister, “but do you not know that from every little town and village and tiny hamlet in England there is a road leading to London? Whenever I get hold of a text, I say to myself, ‘There is a road from here to Jesus Christ, and I mean to keep on His track till I get to Him.’” “Well,” said the young man, “but suppose you are preaching from a text that says nothing about Christ?” “Then I will go over hedge and ditch but what I will get at Him.”

So must we do, brethren; we must have Christ in all our discourses, whatever else is in or not in them. There ought to be enough of the gospel in every sermon to save a soul. Take care that it is so when you are called to preach before Her Majesty the Queen, and if you have to preach to charwomen or chairmen, still always take care that there is the real gospel in every sermon.”

For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

– 1 Corinthians 2:22

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT SEVEN

Always Ready to Endure Against Opposition (Acts 4:1-22)

“This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” – Acts 4:11-12

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read 1 Peter 4:1-22 / Reflect Daily on Acts 4:11-12
- Review “The Global Church” (*Multiply*, 77-88)
- Watch Radical’s *The Global Church* via the QR



PURPOSE: Unit seven will help prepare followers of Jesus to be ready for the certain rejection and opposition that will be encountered as ambassadors of the gospel and encourage them to endure in the power of the name of Jesus Christ.

When believers are engaged in regular sharing of the gospel there will be those who are annoyed by the message. Peter and the early Christians faced this often as they introduced the good news of Jesus to those who had not yet heard.

In Acts 4, there are several lessons for believers today. Boldness is clearly important, but maybe more so is how Peter and John continued to stand on the message of Jesus Christ as the giver of salvation, by way of the crucifixion and resurrection.

Additionally, their posture was not that of belligerence nor lawfulness, but rather faith in remaining true to God over any requirement by man to be untrue to God.

As it relates to discipling others, much as Acts will begin to highlight the spread of the name of Jesus outside of Jerusalem unto the farthest parts of the earth, followers of Jesus must remain aware of the global Church as the bride of Christ and the aim of God’s redemptive plan.

Central to the *Multiply* content and video link for this unit is the emphasis on taking the name of Jesus around the globe, praying for global brothers and sisters who face regular opposition, and challenging all followers of Jesus to participate in the global discipleship of the global, universal Church.

PONDER

1. When was the last time you faced opposition to the gospel? Were you prohibited from the sharing or instructed to deny the name of Jesus? Is there a difference? What is a believer's response to workplace rules prohibiting proselytizing?
2. In Acts 4:7-10, the source of Peter's words when he is before the court is identified, as is the source of his power to heal. Who are these sources? How does this passage equip and encourage us to always be ready?
3. If you believe the Bible is fully authoritative in all matters of faith and practice, what must you believe concerning Acts 4:12? How is this verse helpful in sharing the gospel and discipling new believers?
4. Verse 13 of Acts 4 is full of encouragement and spiritual insight. List at least three observations from this verse that are profitable and applicable.
5. The Bible is clear that authority is to be obeyed, except for when authority requires disobedience to God's Word. In Acts 4:19-20, why can't Peter and John keep quiet when it comes to the name of Jesus? Did they insist it was their "right," or was it something else? What would it mean for that to be our reason as well?
6. Sharing the gospel, disciples making disciples, God's plan of redemption from Genesis to Revelation ... all of these culminate with a focus on the global Church. In *Multiply*, read (pp. 84-88) and answer *Q7* (p. 88).

PUT INTO ACTION

Consider the scenarios below and honestly describe your likely reaction. Then, describe the reaction you aspire to have one day. As you consider your responses, turn each scenario into a prayer request for boldness and readiness, with the aim of sharing the reason for your hope with gentleness and kindness. Discuss with a group or others for perspective, encouragement, and advice.

A stranger in the store check-out line sees your ROCC t-shirt and says, “I don’t go to church, but I’m curious as to why you go to that church?”

(Present Response)

.....

(Future Response)

Your good friend and neighbor just brought up the topic of “religion” and says, “I could never be friends with anyone who thinks one religion is the only way to heaven.”

(Present Response)

.....

(Future Response)

It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage, now as always, Christ will be honored. – Philippians 1:20

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT EIGHT

Always Ready to Pray (Acts 4:23-31)

And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness. – Acts 4:29

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- **Read Acts 4:23-31 / Reflect Daily on Acts 4:29**
- **Listen to David Beaty's *Building a Life of Prayer* via QR →**



PURPOSE: The goal of unit eight is to help followers of Jesus develop an instinctive bend toward praise and prayer despite the most challenging of circumstances. This characteristic of a Christian's life is both a necessary part of the gospel sharing testimony and an important spiritual posture to teach others.

Followers of Jesus can learn a great deal from the early believers in how they responded, and didn't respond, to unjust and unfair situations.

Just think about what is happening in Acts 4 ...

As the chapter begins, Peter and John have recently healed a man in the name of Jesus, when they are approached by a group that is extremely interested in what they have to say. Then right in the middle of the excitement, out of nowhere, they are shut down, arrested, thrown in jail, slandered, and threatened. Wait, what?

Even in this, after they are released, rather than complain, plot revenge, or rage against the religious machine, they took it to the Lord in prayer. They praised God and reaffirmed their confidence in his sovereign, ordained will for them.

Having an always ready, instinctive bend toward praising, praying, and proclaiming the sovereignty of God is a recipe for an always ready life on mission.

Finally, this unit includes a link to an episode of the *Building a Life of Prayer* podcast by David Beaty, titled *How to Pray When You're Challenged or Threatened*, an overview of Acts chapter 4.

PONDER

1. When you receive bad news, do you instinctively go to God? List an example.

When you receive good news, do you instinctively go to God? List an example.

2. What do you notice in Acts 4:23-24 about Christian community? Do you look to share moments of praise and prayer with others? Why or why not?
3. The believers used a few terms in their prayer – Sovereign, predestined, planned, Your hand – in describing their understanding of what was going on around them. What do these terms mean and why did they use them in the prayer? What do these terms mean to you and your relationship with God?
4. Psalm 2:1-2 is quoted within the prayer. What were they using this psalm to say to the Lord and reinforce in their situation? Why would these friends believe there was a connection between what had happened to Peter and John and this psalm?
5. Scripture has already referred to these men as common and uneducated, now Acts 4:29 indicates they were likely not naturally courageous either, as they depended on the Lord's strength to retain their boldness. How do you relate?

PUT INTO ACTION

- In the space below, write a prayer for boldness and courage as it relates to a gospel sharing or disciple making opportunity the Lord has placed on your heart, or placed in your path. If you are unaware of either, pray for attentiveness and readiness to see these opportunities in every interaction.

Sovereign Lord,

- Have you recently experienced something good in your life? Are you currently experiencing something really difficult in your life? Were you surprised with great joy? Struck by deep sorrow? Impacted by good, bad, or neutral change in your life? If any of these, with who can you share a time of prayer, shared praise, or shared grief? Complete the following:

**I will reach out to _____
and ask them to join me in prayer. We will go before the Lord to praise him, petition him, express our gratitude and our needs to him.**

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. – Acts 4:31

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT NINE

Always Ready to Live Courageously on Mission (Acts 6,7:54-60)

And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep. – Acts 7:59-60

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 6 & 7 / Reflect Daily on Acts 4:11-12
- Review “The Local Church” (*Multiply*, 65-75)
- Watch NCL’s *3 Circles in 3 Minutes* via the QR



PURPOSE: Unit nine will bring to light the possible costs of following Jesus into a life on mission, one marked by sharing the gospel and helping others grow in their faith. While most will never experience persecution unto death, many do, and this realization should prompt prayer, perspective, and a greater dependency on God.

The theme of courage and boldness has been prominent in Acts ever since Peter and John’s arrest in chapter 4. It will continue to be throughout the remainder of the book.

Stephen, chosen to serve the people as an early deacon of the church, was said to have been full of grace and power, and as one having great wisdom and a life of good repute. It would be from that well of godly character and obedience that he would draw courage and boldness before the religious leaders.

In Stephen, lay Christians find a model. This unit will emphasize the call for evangelism and disciple-making as not solely one to ordained ministers and missionaries, but to all followers of Jesus.

Through the selected pages of *Multiply*, this unit will consider the role of the local church as a point of connection for her members. While not the only place, the local church is certainly the God-ordained community most available and purposed for disciples to serve, minister, and fulfill the call for building up and sending out.

In the spirit of embracing the potential for ridicule and rejection, the video clip in this unit provides a glimpse of 3 Circles evangelism on the streets, with actual responses and conversations. Be encouraged and emboldened.

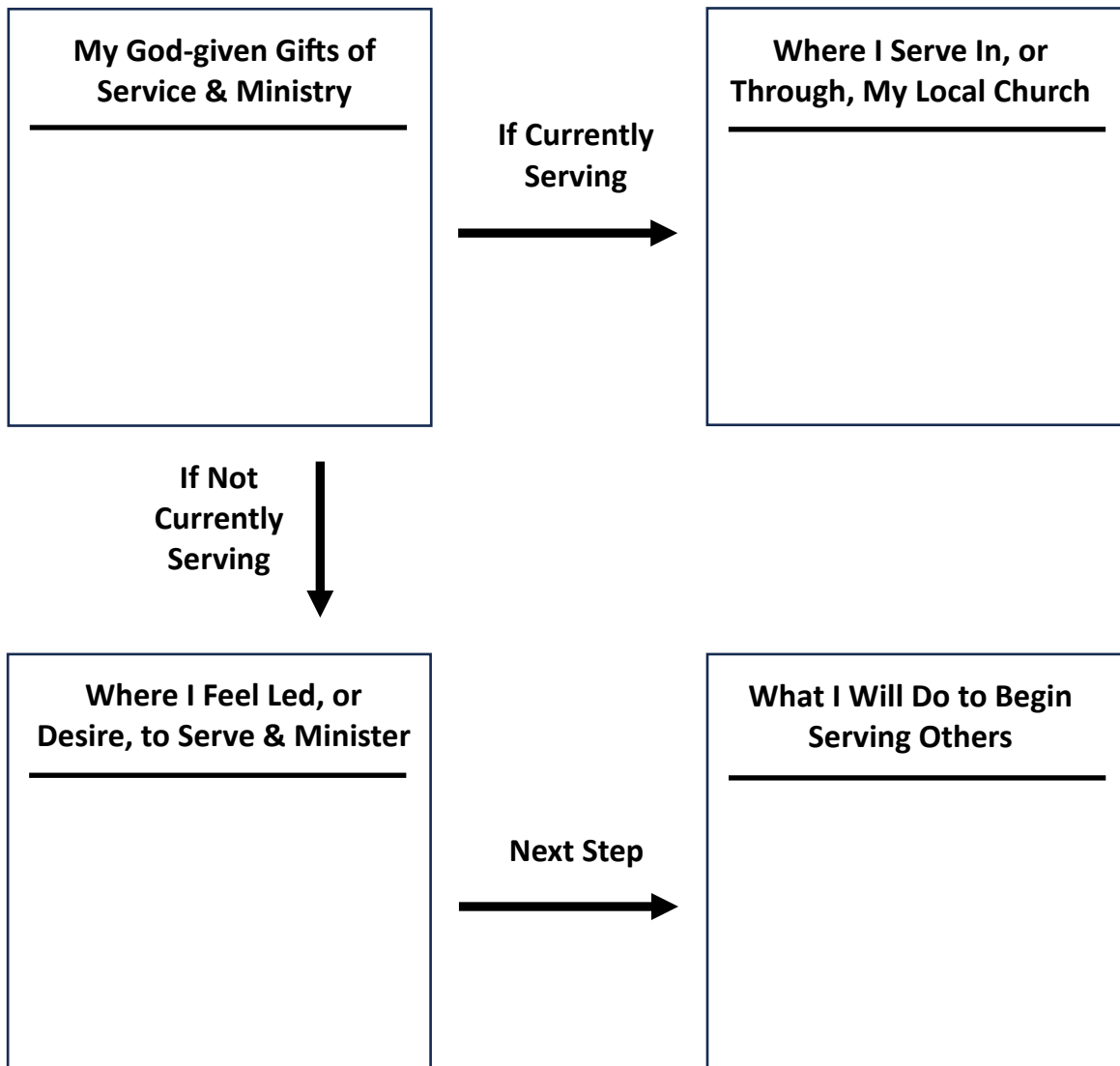
PONDER

1. Where do you serve in, or through, the local church? With what gifts of service has the Lord equipped you? How are you stewarding these gifts?
2. Acts 6:1 begins with a comment regarding growth in the church. What do you notice about “who” was increasing? Was it church attendees or those calling themselves Christians? Based on the definition of this word, why is this key?
3. As a result of believers serving one another in the work of ministry, what two things occur in Jerusalem? (Acts 6:7). How would that look in your community?
4. Almost immediately, Stephen was called to defend himself against charges of “preaching Jesus” (Acts 6:9-14). Describe Stephen’s response – his presence, his defense, his courage. If in Stephen’s shoes, are you ready to respond as he did?
5. Acts 7:54-60 is a powerful scene with various subplots and dynamics. What is most impactful to you about this passage? What is most applicable in your life?
6. From sending and serving, to building up members with the character and courage of Stephen, there is much in Acts 6 & 7 that reinforces the purpose of the local church. In *Multiply*, read (pp. 71-75) and answer *Q6 & Q7* (p. 72).

PUT INTO ACTION

Fill in the boxes below, make notes, and begin praying over your ministry of service to others. Ask others to pray with you and actively seek out opportunities the Lord presents. Be open to those things which require more courage than normal. May the Lord be honored and praised because of your service and may you find a great blessing in the selflessness. **Ultimately, may our service to others always be attentive to the opportunities for sharing the gospel and building up disciples.**

Start



Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, as love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. – 1 Peter 4:8-10

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT TEN

Always Ready for Unexpected Opportunities (Acts 8:26-40)

“Do you understand what you are reading?” He said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” So, he invited Philip to come up and sit with him ... Beginning with this Scripture Philip told him the good news about Jesus. – Acts 8:30-31...35

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 8:4-8, 26-40 / Reflect Daily on Acts 30-35
- Review “Why Study the Bible” (*Multiply*, pp. 91-106)
- Watch Watermark’s *How to Read the Bible* via QR —→



PURPOSE: The account of Philip and the Ethiopian in unit ten provides for several lessons. Most notably is the lesson of preparedness for sharing the gospel at unexpected times and in surprising locations.

Readiness for unexpected opportunities is not simply a matter of telling oneself to be ready all the time, but as demonstrated by Philip, it requires a great deal of “pre-work” and preparation.

That pre-work for Philip included the willingness to obey the Lord’s prompting on his heart to go. It included an openness to the Holy Spirit to be moved at anytime and anyplace to interact with others. And importantly, it included the loving, learning, and living out of God’s Word to share the gospel from exactly the point of where an unbeliever sits and has questions. That’s a recipe for readiness.

Of course, sharing the gospel and discipling other believers are key reasons for studying the Bible, but there are many other biblical reasons for doing so. In this unit, the *Multiply* content will cover some of the good reasons for reading Scripture and some of the wrong reasons for reading Scripture.

Finally, when Philip encountered the Ethiopian along the road to Gaza, the man was reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah. Philip would utilize that Scripture to tell of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Because it is important for all believers to understand how the entirety of God’s Word points forward to Jesus and the fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan for us, the video link in this unit will emphasize this with a short example.

PONDER

1. Complete the following statements regarding God's Word.
 - The Bible is comprised of _____ books and/or letters.
 - There are _____ books in the Old Testament.
 - There are _____ books in the New Testament.
 - The Old Testament is about ...
 - The New Testament is about ...
 - The Bible is ...
2. The Ethiopian was learning about God with a scroll of Isaiah. How would you take the passage (Isaiah 53) and tell the good news of Jesus? (Acts 9:32-35).
3. Philip uses a three-word phrase to engage the conversation. This question is helpful for exploring a conversation with an unbeliever (evangelism) and a believer (discipleship). What is the three-word question?
_____?
4. There are several thoughts on why the Ethiopian Eunuch asked about baptism (Acts 9:36-39). Acts does not say. However, if Isaiah 56:4-5 were part of the conversation, how might that have prompted the question? Hint: Desiring to walk in obedience to God's covenant is a true sign of repentance and belief.
5. As you reflect on your response to Q1, concerning the Bible and how you might explain it to others, read *Multiply* (pp. 96-102) and answer *Q3* (p. 102).

PUT INTO ACTION

- If you were to notice someone around you expressing curiosity about the Christian faith or attempting to learn what exactly the Bible was saying, would you be comfortable asking, “***Do you understand?***” Why or why not?
- Make a list of the major (or minor) areas of Scripture, essentials of the faith, or other biblical topics that you are not prepared to answer and would never ask someone if they understood, in fear they might ask you to explain.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- From your list, select one, circle it, and attempt to learn more about it. Read Scripture, ask another disciple to come alongside you, inquire into the best, most trusted sources for expanding your understanding so that it would not be a barrier to your approaching someone with the good news of Jesus.

I will ask this question about God’s Word: _____
_____?

I hope to ask _____ to help me understand.

- Share with someone, or in a group, how your understanding of God’s Word has changed, or been strengthened, since you began this study. What is the most significant lesson you have learned from what the Bible is and how God would have us use it?

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. – Romans 15:4

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT ELEVEN

Always Ready to Disciple the Most Unlikely Believers (Acts 9:1-31)

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. – Acts 9:31

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 9:1-31 / Reflect Daily on Acts 9:31
- Review “Heart of a Disciple Maker” (*Multiply*, pp. 39-48)
- Watch Rosaria Butterfield’s *Unlikely Convert* via QR →



PURPOSE: In Acts 9, there are two key individuals in the first 19 verses. There is Saul and there is Ananias. The purpose of unit eleven is for believers to consider the concerns of Ananias, the one most readers will more easily relate, and challenge their own readiness to disciple new believers, regardless of their past.

In Acts 7:58 – 8:3, Saul’s reputation is well-known, preceding him wherever he travelled. From the earliest of introductions to his own testimony of past behavior (Acts 22:1-5), Saul demonstrated himself to be no less than pure evil toward the early Christian Church. Until ... the road to Damascus.

Saul is converted (he will go by Paul beginning in Acts 13:9), and clearly becomes a follower of Jesus. Well, it is clear in Scripture, but certainly not immediately clear to those in the Church. That is where Ananias enters.

This unit places readers in the shoes of Ananias and asks, “What if you are instructed to disciple a Saul-like individual starting today, are you ready?”

To this, the *Multiply* content gets to the heart of the matter with a discussion of disciple making motivation. In other words, why do we disciple in the first place?

Finally, most everyone can think of a pre-conversion Saul in their life, someone who is presently far away from Christ. The video clip in this unit introduces Rosaria Butterfield as an example of someone who perhaps fits an especially prevalent profile today. May it be evidence of God changing lives and the need for believers to be ready to come alongside all changed lives.

PONDER

1. “I saw the light!” Like Saul, you have a testimony formed from the moment you recognized Jesus as Lord and saw the light of God’s truth. Share some talking points and details of that moment, or season, in your life.
2. Describe Saul’s general mission and his Damascus mission (Acts 9:1-3).
3. Given Saul’s sinful condition, would you imagine he would be the same man to write Philippians 3:4-14 (read and compare to this early biography). What hope does that give you? What do you learn from his conversion?
4. After conversion, Saul is led to Ananias. How does Ananias initially respond? How would he have responded had he known how God would use Paul?
5. Ananias is referred to as a disciple; what evidence is there that he was a genuine follower and learner of Jesus? (Acts 9:17-20).
6. In what ways does Acts 9:26-31 reveal great faith and great commitment to discipleship, and great commitment to evangelism?
7. When the Lord places a new believer in your path and prompts you to come alongside them, but because of their past you hesitate, perhaps the content in *Multiply* for this unit will help. Read (pp. 39-44) and answer *Q1 (p. 40)*.

PUT INTO ACTION

- Write out the name (initials or nickname) of the person in your life who is the farthest away from the Lord, perhaps even the most hostile toward God of anyone you know:

- Pray regularly for this individual with the hope and encouragement of Saul's Damascus Road conversion. Be ready to answer questions, come alongside, demonstrate a life that is different and compelling.
- When you reflect on your pre-Jesus life, what were the identifying marks of that life? What do you recall you lived for, were driven by, desired most? Write out a few of those here, and if you received Jesus at an earlier age, describe the ways your life has demonstrated a less spiritually mature walk at times.
- As you look at this list, and you consider the individual above, allow the Lord to soften your heart to the lostness and sadness of those without a reason for hope within them. As Paul knew well, and would write about, those without Christ simply can't know what they don't know. Replace anger and bitterness toward unbelievers with urgency and concern. Pray for them and be prepared to give the gospel answer. Write a short prayer below asking the Lord to soften your heart and prepare you in readiness.

Lord Jesus,

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. – 2 Corinthians 5:17

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS



PART TWO

Units 12 – 25

(Acts 10 – Acts 28, Revelation 21)

Gospel Sharing

3 Circles Sending & Testimonies

Disciple Making

***Multiply* (God's Redemptive Plan: Parts 4-5)**

UNIT TWELVE

Always Ready to Go Outside Your Comfort Zone (Acts 10:9-48)

And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.” – Acts 10:28

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 10:9-48 / Reflect Daily on Acts 10:28
- Review “Creation” (*Multiply*, pp. 139-149)
- Watch NAMB’s *A Life Changed by 3 Circles* via QR —→



PURPOSE: In Part Two of *Always Ready*, there is a refined scope to the dual focus of sharing the gospel and helping others grow in their faith. Beginning now, this shift will be noticeable in the areas of evangelism and in establishing a foundational understanding of the redemptive plan of salvation, from Genesis to Revelation.

As the early church grew, Acts tells us that it was not a matter of increasing church attendance, but a multiplication of disciples. There is great urgency to sharing the good news and in equipping those who believe so they might also begin to share.

Unit twelve addresses an especially critical aspect of readiness for Kingdom ministry, the willingness to break from our comfort zones and prejudices, and in non-essentials, the willingness to admit one’s dogmatic views as a barrier to the gospel.

There are numerous applications to these lessons. Acts 10 describes Peter learning a few of them directly from the Lord, resulting in a changed heart toward those different than himself. There is also a willingness to break from religious legalism, which ultimately results in a tremendous impact on the spread of the Gospel.

Additionally, this unit begins a high-level journey in *Multiply* through the biblical story of God’s salvation (redemptive) plan for creation. In the beginning, God

Finally, as the emphasis in Part One of *Always Ready* was equipping in 3 Circles conversations, now believers are asked to utilize this tool and share the gospel of Jesus with greater readiness. View the included testimony video as encouragement.

PONDER

1. Complete the following with prayerful and honest consideration:

I would have a difficult time caring enough, taking the time to invest relationally, and/or engaging in a gospel conversation with a person who:

(is from ... is of ... believes in ... identifies as ... votes for ...)

2. Before moving on, pray for those you identified in Q1. Pray the Lord will soften your heart toward lostness and, when provided the opportunity, you would be willing to share the reason for your hope with love and grace.
3. What is the Lord demonstrating to Peter in Acts 10:9-16? What is most surprising to you about this vision and revelation?
4. What misunderstandings about God's Word or his character or his expectation of you has changed over time? Has he taught you, as he did Peter, that openness to biblical correction, regardless of spiritual maturity, is always possible and often necessary? What are your thoughts?
5. Read Acts 10:27-29 and 34-36 and describe what is happening? While correcting Peter on dietary law was helpful for freeing Peter from legalism, on what was God actually correcting Peter's beliefs?
6. What is Peter doing in Acts 10:37-43? Do you recognize the central elements?
7. The story of the gospel begins in a garden. Read more about God's perfect design and existence with him in *Multiply*, (pp. 143-149), answer **Q7** (p. 149).

PUT INTO ACTION

Sharing the gospel is a relational endeavor. While the Lord works in mysterious ways, able to transform hearts with or without us, the picture of Scripture is that God desires his people to go out in love, in compassion, in kindness, and in understanding as agents of his transformative power.

In short, a believers call to witness is a call to invest in other created images of God and to see them as God sees them. This is most often an investment of time, developing a relationship, building personal credibility, allowing the witness of one's life to supplement the witness of one's words.

Yes, planting seeds is a vital part of sharing, but most often the seeds are planted only after the ground has been prepared. Our call to cultivating the ground is a call to vulnerability, conviction, and discomfort.

Vital to this call is the understanding that evangelism is not the placing of targets on unbelievers. They are not prized trophies to display in the case of a prideful heart. Believers are not selling, twisting arms, demanding, or forcing anything.

In most fruitful and effective conversion testimonies, there is a story of a believer loving that person unconditionally and consistently over time. That is the call of evangelism that naturally flows into a call of discipleship.

In consideration of the above, who has God already placed in your life with an existing relationship, and who you know, or believe to know, are not yet followers of Jesus. Name them below, pray over them, pray for a continued relational blessing, and a readiness to engage in a gospel conversation.

<u>Family Member</u>	<u>Neighbor / Friend</u>
<u>Co-Worker / Organization</u>	<u>Community / Other</u>

If you really fulfill the royal law according to Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin. – James 2:8-9

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT THIRTEEN

Always Ready for Revival in Disciple-Making Churches (Acts 11:19-30)

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. – Acts 11:21

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 11:19-30 / Reflect Daily on Acts 11:21
- Review “The Fall” (*Multiply*, pp. 151-159)
- Watch Tim Keller’s *Revivals Are Quiet* via the QR →



PURPOSE: The objective of unit thirteen is to encourage reflection on, and desire for, a revival movement in the Church. To this, Acts 11:19-30 illustrates the fruit of faithful sharing and disciple-making, and allows future generation Christians a vision of what revival most resembles.

Following Peter’s recognition of his own personal bias against the backdrop of God’s master plan for all of creation, two important occurrences take place – Gentiles turn to Jesus, and Peter explains his change of heart to early Church leaders.

Interestingly, it is at this point that the details of a spreading gospel are shared, to include a reference to disciples of Jesus first being referred to as ‘Christians’ at the church in Antioch (Acts 11:26).

One of the primary emphases in this passage is in the number of new disciples being added. There are three references to “*a great many people*” within this passage. As a more established Church, it could be considered the earliest season of revival. Of course, that depends on one’s definition of revival, which this unit will address.

For a next chapter in the biblical narrative of God’s great restoration plan, his created images move away from his design into disobedience, or sin. In *Multiply*, the subject of the Fall is considered.

Finally, a short clip of Tim Keller’s thoughts on revival is provided. It is likely not what many might expect on the topic of revival and should prompt good discussion.

PONDER

1. How does a “revival” start? What does it look like? Describe what happens?
2. In Psalm 85, the psalmist prays for the Lord to “*revive us and restore us again.*” Likewise, the old hymn sings, “*revive us again, fill each heart with thy love, may each heart be rekindled with fire from above.*” What do these indicate as to where revival begins? How does this change your answer to Q1?
3. What three things occur in Antioch? (Acts 11:20-21). What does the sequence in which these things occur seem to indicate?
4. If the “*great many people added*” is to be considered a revival in the Church, what do you notice of the church dynamics (what was present and what was happening in the church) that set the stage for new disciples in Acts 11:23-26?
5. What takes place as an outworking of genuine faith in Acts 11:27-30? What does that tell you about the heart of the church in Antioch? What else should be present as the outworking of a multiplying church of disciples?
6. “*In Antioch the disciples were first called Christians*” (Acts 11:26). What is the definition of a ‘Christian?’ What is the definition of a ‘disciple?’ Based on these definitions, complete the sentence: A Christian Disciple is ...
7. How did we get from the garden of God’s design to brokenness? What happened? In *Multiply* read (pp. 151-159) and answer **Q2 (p. 154)**.

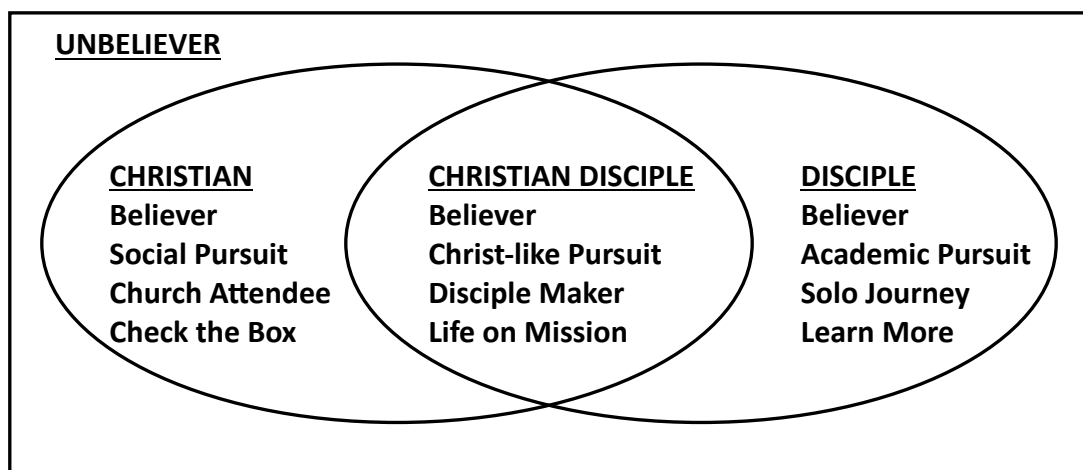
PUT INTO ACTION

- The Church in Acts took the call to Christ-like discipleship seriously. Because of this, believers experienced the life-changing results of a devotion to sharing the gospel and growing together in their faith.

Early believers also knew the importance of a life that was compelling and different. Their desire to live as Christ identified them to the world as **Christians** (*of, or pertaining to, Christ*). Yet, they identified themselves as **Disciples** of Jesus (*learners, students desiring to become as their teacher*).

In what or who is your identity? Does the world see a compelling and different life? Would it surprise anyone to know you were a Christian Disciple of Jesus?

- Place an **X** where you are today. Place a ☆ where you aspire to be.



- When you think about the relationships you named in unit twelve, how does your identity, relative to your faith, impact the opportunity to share the gospel with them? Pray for your relationships, that they all might now Christ and see you as a learner desiring to become more like Jesus.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit in me. – Psalm 51:10

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT FOURTEEN

Always Ready to Teach the Good News of God's Word (Acts 13:13-44)

“And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’” – Acts 13:32-33

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 13:13-44 / Reflect Daily on Acts 13:32-33
- Review “Covenant with Abraham” (*Multiply*, pp. 161-171)
- Watch Bible Project’s *Story of the Bible* via the QR →



PURPOSE: Unit fourteen reintroduces the Apostle Paul to the Acts account, and in doing so demonstrates the power of God's Word in changing hearts. In this, the unit considers the importance of continuing to grow in all biblical knowledge and understanding for the purpose of sharing the gospel and enabling others to grow and share as well.

Acts 13 begins with Paul and Barnabas in the synagogue on a Sabbath day, when after the reading of the Law and Prophets, the rulers asked if either of them, or their companions, “*had a word of encouragement to share*” (Acts 13:15).

Followers of Jesus should note the readiness for which Paul stood up and shared the most encouraging words he could possibly share, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Further, he utilized the history and insight of the Hebrew Scriptures to connect the dots of the gospel, which is at the heart of the *Multiply* content in Part Two of the *Always Ready* study.

In fact, in this unit’s *Multiply* material, the focus is on God’s covenant with Abraham, and the start of God sharing his plan to save the world. This is the next connecting dot in God’s redemptive story from Genesis to Revelation.

Finally, to reinforce how this biblical narrative brings the gospel together, for both evangelism and disciple making, the Bible Project video clip in this unit highlights the storyline of the Bible with elements of Paul’s “encouragement” in Acts 13.

PONDER

1. Quick, stand up and give us a word of encouragement, your very best – GO!

*(NOTE: Try to read the **Multiply** chapter and view video before going forward)*

2. What biblical details in Paul's sermon from Acts 13:17 – 26 do you recognize? What biblical details in Paul's sermon are unfamiliar to you?
3. Is Paul simply bragging about how much Bible he knows, or does he have a reason for including all of this in his "word of encouragement?" If so, what?
4. What biblical details in Paul's sermon from Acts 13:27-39 do you recognize? What biblical details in Paul's sermon are unfamiliar to you?
5. Look at the reaction in Acts 13:42-44. In your own words, what is the moral of the story? How does any lesson to this passage apply today?
6. Yes, the 'what' of the gospel is enough, but questions of 'why' and 'how' are important. In ***Multiply*** read (pp. 166-171) and answer ***Q6*** (p. 167) to see God's gospel plan forming as an answer to the brokenness.
7. Now, stand up and give us a word of encouragement, your very best – GO!

PUT INTO ACTION

- In unit twelve you began praying for individuals who you already know are likely not-yet followers of Jesus. Aside from praying for them, have you had the opportunity to engage in a gospel conversation with them, serve them, or simply love them over the past few weeks? If not, **make a note next to their name of how you might be intentional** in the coming weeks and be ready to share as the Lord leads and allows.

<u>Family Member</u>	<u>Neighbor / Friend</u>
<u>Co-Worker / Organization</u>	<u>Community / Other</u>

- The Bible:** Teaching the good news of God's Word means knowing the good news of God's Word. Wherever you start today, keep growing in it each new day. Get to know the genres, order, structure, and purpose of the Bible.

OLD TESTAMENT - 39 Books			NEW TESTAMENT - 27 Books	
LAW - 5	POETRY - 5	MAJOR PROPHETS - 5	GOSPELS - 4	PAUL'S LETTERS TO FRIENDS - 4
GENESIS	JOB	ISAIAH	MATTHEW	1 TIMOTHY
EXODUS	PSALMS	JEREMIAH	MARK	2 TIMOTHY
LEVITICUS	PROVERBS	LAMENTATIONS	LUKE	TITUS
NUMBERS	ECCLESIASTES	EZEKIEL	JOHN	PHILEMON
DEUTERONOMY	SONG OF SOLOMON	DANIEL		
HISTORY - 12		MINOR PROPHETS - 12	HISTORY - 1	
JOSHUA		HOSEA	ACTS	
JUDGES		JOEL		
RUTH		AMOS	PAUL'S LETTERS TO CHURCHES - 9	GENERAL LETTERS - 9
1 SAMUEL		OBADIAH	ROMANS	HEBREWS
2 SAMUEL		JONAH	1 CORINTHIANS	JAMES
1 KINGS		MICAH	2 CORINTHIANS	1 PETER
2 KINGS		NAHUM	GALATIANS	2 PETER
1 CHRONICLES		HABAKKUK	EPHESIANS	1 JOHN
2 CHRONICLES		ZEPHANIAH	PHILIPPIANS	2 JOHN
EZRA		HAGGAI	COLOSSIANS	3 JOHN
NEHEMIAH		ZECHARIAH	1 THESSALONIANS	JUDE
ESTHER		MALACHI	2 THESSALONIANS	REVELATION

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. – Romans 1:16

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT FIFTEEN

Always Ready to Extend Grace in Non-Essentials (Acts 15:1-21)

“God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit, having cleansed their hearts by faith.” – Acts 15:7-9

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- **Read Acts 15:1-21 / Reflect Daily on Acts 15:7-9**
- **Review “Exodus and Redemption” (*Multiply*, 173-184)**
- **Attend a Multiply Dessert Gathering**

PURPOSE: Unit fifteen highlights a pivotal moment in the history of the Church, the Jerusalem Council. The resulting decision of this council, one of extending gospel grace over legalistic law, is the lesson and purpose of this unit.

John MacArthur summarizes the importance of what happened in Acts 15, he writes:

Throughout its history, the church’s leaders have met to settle doctrinal issues. Historians point to seven ecumenical councils in the church’s early history, especially the Councils of Nicaea (AD 325) and Chalcedon (AD451). Yet the most important council was the first one – the Jerusalem Council – because it established the answer to the most vital doctrinal question of all: “What must a person do to be saved?” The apostles and elders defied efforts to impose legalism and ritualism as necessary prerequisites for salvation. They forever affirmed that salvation is totally by grace through faith in Christ alone.¹

Barnabas, Paul, James and others agreed that certain non-essential practices and doctrines should never be a stumbling block to one receiving salvation. Rather, believers should extend much grace, or liberty, on these non-salvific practices.

Interestingly, the *Multiply* biblical storyline this week points to the period of time for which a few of these old covenant laws were introduced. Additionally, the Exodus event provides a beautiful depiction of God’s deliverance of his people, a foreshadowing of a greater rescue and more complete redemption.

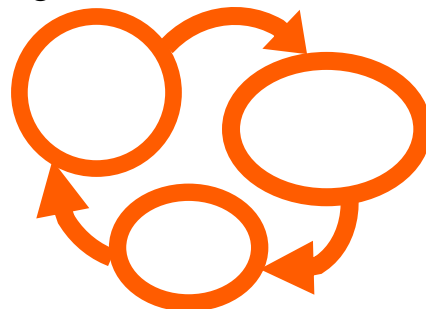
¹ MacArthur, John F. *MacArthur Study Bible, 2nd Edition*, Study Notes Acts 15:1-30, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2021), 1512.

PONDER

1. *In Essentials, Unity. In Non-Essentials, Liberty. In All Things, Charity.*
 - What does this mean?
 - What is a non-essential?
2. What non-essential belief or ritual have you ever tied to salvation? In other words, you are not 100% certain of salvation unless you do or believe (what)?
3. In Acts 15:1-6, what is described as the reason for the gathering? Why would this be an issue? What argument could you make for both sides of the debate?
4. Read Acts 15:7-9, Romans 10:9-13, and Ephesians 2:8-9. Write a one sentence summary of these passages that might serve as a response to how one is saved and restored in relationship with God for all eternity.
5. “And all the assembly fell silent” (Acts 15:12). It seems the words of the preceding verses, specifically Acts 15:10-11, created this mic drop moment in the room. Why are those words especially profound?
6. The verdict is found in Acts 15:19-20. How should this decision be interpreted? What does “not trouble” mean? What about that list of “don’ts?”
7. Understanding the Bible as the revealed plan of God’s salvation is especially helpful in evangelism and disciple making. In ***Multiply*** read (pp. 179-182) and answer ***Q3*** (p. 182) to see the introduction of a Passover lamb as a foreshadowing of The Passover Lamb.

PUT INTO ACTION

- **Multiply Desserts** – This week will include a series of dessert fellowships designed as opportunities to check in on your *Always Ready* year. The emphasis will be on supporting groups relative to the curriculum, encouraging one another in sharing the gospel, and communicating upcoming evangelism opportunities. This event will replace normally scheduled group meetings.
- **Revisiting 3 Circles** – As a refresher to the training on 3 Circles, conducted in Part One of *Always Ready*, the next four units will include each of the steps for turning everyday conversations into gospel conversations. Those steps include:



1. **Transition Statements**
2. **Gospeling Tool**
3. **Share the Gospel**
4. **Invitation to Receive**

- **Transition Statements:** As you pray for opportunities to share, it will help to consider the first step in turning everyday conversations into gospel conversations, a transition statement. Some thoughts and suggestions follow.

First, listen attentively and sincerely. Often you will hear the hurts and frustrations of brokenness in any number of everyday conversations. Have compassion, wait patiently, then consider saying something like the following:

“I haven’t been through that exactly, but I do know pain. Can I share something with you that helped me make sense of it and help me hope again?”

“You said something about religion impacting you. I was recently shown this illustration that sums it up for me, kind of a ‘What God and following Jesus is all about,’ can I share it with you?”

“Why am I so filled with joy? Can I share something with you to answer that?”

“What have I been up to? Actually, I’ve been thinking about this diagram I recently learned and how it sums my life and faith. Can I draw it out for you?”

“You’ve been on my mind. I’ve been thinking about this way to describe what understanding my faith really looks like. Would you mind if I showed you?”

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT SIXTEEN

Always Ready to Resist Culture in Obedience to God (Acts 16:10-24)

One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said. – Acts 16:14

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 16:1-24 / Reflect Daily on Acts 16:14
- Review “Covenant with Moses” (*Multiply*, 187-197)
- Watch TGC’s *Is Your Church Countercultural?* via QR →



PURPOSE: Unit sixteen stresses the point that ever since the mid-first century, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ has always been countercultural. The ramifications for swimming against the societal current can be harsh and unjust. Still, God calls believers to be always ready to resist the cultural influence and obey him.

Acts 16 opens with the introduction of Timothy to ministry, followed by the conversion of Lydia. However, the primary lesson for this study is found in verses 16-24, where the missionaries in Philippi are accused of disturbing the city by “advocating customs” that were simply not practiced by Roman culture.

Importantly, many of the accusations stem from conditions of the heart that are consistent to the fallen human nature since the garden. The priority of profits and greed over decency and generosity, untruth rooted in prejudice, mob mentality generated by fear, all of these indicate the depth of brokenness existing in the world.

This unit encourages believers to be more attentive to cultural “norms” and resist their trappings. Proclaiming the gospel and living a life that is different will always be, well, different. Many, like Lydia, will have their hearts opened by the Lord in response to that difference. Many, like the people of Philippi, will turn hostile.

In *Multiply*, the chapter explores the Mosaic covenant. Tying into Acts, these moral laws are a wonderful example of obedience to God over cultural acceptance.

Finally, this unit’s video clip is a thought-provoking conversation with Chris Watkin and Trevin Wax on understanding the Church as countercultural.

PONDER

1. What descriptions do you use for modern culture - defined as the societal set of norms, beliefs, and way of life? Place into appropriate columns.

Ungodly

Neutral

Godly



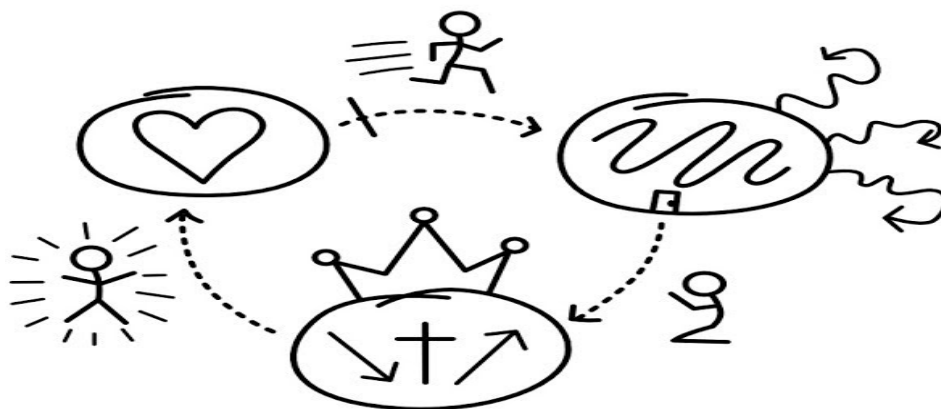
2. In Acts 16:11-15, the missionaries encounter Lydia. In what ways did God orchestrate this gospel sharing conversation? What does that say about a readiness to share and an attentiveness to the world around us?
3. As the missionaries remain in Philippi, what happens in Acts 16:16-18 to upset their stay? What significant insight is found in each of these verses?
 - Acts 16:16 –
 - Acts 16:17 –
 - Acts 16:18 –
4. What is at the heart of the reaction toward the missionaries in Acts 19:19-24? Do you ever experience any of these same heart conditions toward others?
5. Paul and the others were “advocating” Jesus as Lord, with calls to belief in his death and resurrection. How was / is this gospel advocacy countercultural?
6. Believers are called to the mission of changing hearts, not changing culture – agree or disagree? What is the Scriptural evidence for agreeing / disagreeing?
7. Disobedience through the Fall highlighted the holiness of God against the sinfulness of humanity. The covenant with Moses would do the same. Read in *Multiply* (pp. 190-192) and answer *Q3* (p. 192) to learn more.

PUT INTO ACTION

- Look at Q1 on the previous page. In the “Ungodly” column, consider ways your life contributes to this cultural description – in words, behavior, choices, purchases, priorities. How can you resist these cultural influences?
 - A verse of Scripture that can help me in this is: _____.
- Look at Q2 on the previous page. In the “Godly” column, consider ways your life might influence more entries in this column – words, behavior, choices, purchases, priorities. How can you influence others in these ways?
 - A verse of Scripture that can help me in this is: _____.
- **Gospeling Tool:** In Unit Fourteen, the topic of ‘Transition Statements’ was reviewed as step one of the 3 Circles gospel sharing method. Next, the gospeling tool itself, which in this case is the 3 Circles presentation.

The 3 Circles tool is flexible. While the general outline for each circle is solid and should not be radically modified, there are opportunities to personalize the speaking points or customize to context. It’s “your napkin.”

In many examples, Brokenness is explained first, followed by God’s Design. In others, God’s Design is presented first. Some, as below, have utilized an image-based presentation. Can you talk through the conversation outline using these images. Share it with someone this week, a believer or unbeliever.



For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. – 1 Corinthians 1:18

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT SEVENTEEN

Always Ready to Testify Through Your Character (Acts 16:25-40)

Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” – Acts 16:30-31

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 16:25-40 / Reflect Daily on Acts 16:30-31
- Review “Covenant with Moses” (*Multiply*, 199-209)
- Watch David Holcomb’s *Yom Kippur* via the QR —————→



PURPOSE: The primary purpose of unit seventeen is to focus on the power of a believer’s character to testify on their behalf. Essentially, this is the reality of living out one’s faith in such a way that unbelievers will be compelled to learn more.

All of the early Christians were adamant about the need for a verbal proclamation of the gospel. One simply could not be a follower of Jesus and refuse to share the good news with others. Yet, in Acts 16:25-40 it is because of Christ-like character that a Roman guard becomes open to hearing the words.

By recalling the previous passage, the context of this imprisonment is made clear. Accused of disturbing the city with their countercultural teachings, the disciples were thrown into jail where they continued to pray and sing to the Lord. It was only after an earthquake that freed them from their chains that their display of integrity and compassion allowed for an entry into the gospel sharing conversation.

Unit seventeen will challenge believers to live with Christlike character. For some, one encounter might be the only opportunity to witness genuine Christlikeness. So, in that opportunity will unbelievers be drawn to, or repelled by, our character?

In *Multiply*, the Old Testament sacrificial system is in view. To grow in discipleship, it is important to understand the connection between sacrificial feasts, such as Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), and Jesus, the once-and-for-all Sacrifice.

As an additional resource for this important theological connection, one at the core of God’s redemptive plan and the way to salvation, a video from a ROCC Equipping Class explains how Scripture reveals Jesus in the Day of Atonement.

PONDER

1. If you were thrown in jail for your faith, what songs (hymns) would you sing as worship and for other prisoners to hear?
2. Why would the jailer seek to kill himself after the earthquake in Acts 16:27? How does Acts 12:19 or 27:42 provide helpful context?
3. Acts 16:28-34 is rich in application for Christian disciples, including:
 - What character traits (v. 28)?
 - What implied background (v. 30)?
 - What gospel essential (v. 31)?
 - What disciple making essential (v. 32)?
 - What evidence of life transformation (vv. 33-34)?
4. Is living with Christ-like character the same as evangelism? Why or why not?
5. Most agree it is easier to live Christ-like when things are going well, but what about when life is really bad? What is the difference between those who live consistently Christ-like in good and bad times, and those who struggle?
6. In the Old Testament, the sacrificial system allowed God's people a way of seeking forgiveness and transferring the sin off of them onto an innocent life. This is an important disciple making understanding. Learn more in *Multiply* (pp. 205-209) and answer *Q8* (p. 209).

PUT INTO ACTION

- As a professing believer in Jesus Christ, are there aspects of how you live out your life – your character – that could damage your witness? If so, recognize those areas and lay them before the Lord in prayer. Ask a trusted friend to provide accountability for you in this area and desire change, not simply for the sake of obedience, but in order that your life might attract others to Jesus.

Lord Jesus, I truly desire to live as you lived, but I am struggling. I am consistently failing to represent you in my life when it comes to: _____

*I trust you for your strength. I am grateful for forgiveness.
Amen.*

- **Share the Gospel:** Having considered the Transition Statement and the Gospeling Tool in the past two units, now step 3, Sharing the Gospel.

Throughout Acts there are many examples of believers sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is central to the message of the early church and all believers.

When using the 3 Circles Gospel sharing tool, at this point you have transitioned (**transition statement**) the everyday conversation into a presentation of the 3 Circles (**gospeling tool**).

When you complete the third circle, pointing to repenting and receiving, this is a good time to share the gospel, from creation design to the Fall to the plan in Jesus – his life, death, burial, resurrection – to restored relationship by repentance of self and dependency on him. The gospel of Jesus Christ.

If you are not comfortable or confident with articulating the gospel, now is the time to ask for assistance. There is an example in the introduction of this study, and several references throughout. The gospel is concise, clear, and complete with everything necessary to understand the essential doctrine of salvation. Be ready to know it. Be ready to articulate it. Be ready to share it.

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” – Matthew 5:16

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT EIGHTEEN

Always Ready to Interact (Acts 17:16-34)

Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.” – Acts 17:21-22

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 17:16-34 / Reflect Daily on Acts 17:21-22
- Review “God’s Presence on Earth” (*Multiply*, 211-222)
- Listen to Knowing Faith’s Podcast *Tabernacle* via QR →



PURPOSE: In unit eighteen, the emphasis is on the readiness to interact with others despite the context of the setting or the diversity of the people involved. In some cases, this will stretch comfort zones, while in others it will allow for using the expertise and knowledge that is not necessarily grounded in spiritual understanding.

The Apostle Paul was a highly educated and sophisticated Jewish Roman citizen. This designation allowed him access to conversations and settings for which many early disciples of Jesus were not allowed.

Acts 17:16-34 describes the daily routine of Paul as including a stroll through the marketplace where the various philosophers tended to gather. While walking through the market one day, a group of Stoic and Epicurean philosophers invited him over. Paul was always ready to engage in conversation, even with mostly pagan thinkers.

From this, we know the question for believers is not, “**Will I** be called into a conversation on wildly diverse topics, and in mostly secular context,” but rather, “**When I** am interacting with others in these settings (by choice or by request), am I prepared to turn that conversation into a gospel conversation?”

A real possibility for current day Christians is with those who are Jewish in their faith. For this, knowledge of the Hebrew Scripture is helpful. In *Multiply*, the dwellings, or tabernacles, of God’s presence are in view. They are important connections between God’s original presence in creation, and his final eternal presence. The attached podcast link can aid in this understanding.

PONDER

1. List the various people groups and settings you interact with on a regular basis for which most are not followers of Jesus. What aspect of these shared groups can you speak into with understanding?
2. What type of person / people group would make you most uncomfortable if they invited you into a conversation about God? What would be most difficult to overcome? What can you ask the Lord to do in your heart in preparation?
3. What does Acts 17:16-17 tell us about Paul's intentional readiness to interact?
4. What does it mean to "reason" with others? (Acts 17:17). In 1 Peter 3:15, what is the difference between the translation of "give a defense" and "give an answer" for your hope?
5. Does Acts 17:21 sound familiar in describing a modern world? Why does "latest and greatest" seem to be so enticing to a fallen human nature?
6. How did Paul adapt his sharing in Acts 17:22-31 to the context when compared to previous presentations? Why did that matter? Is this ok?
7. What does Tabernacle Theology mean? Read (**pp. 211-222**) in *Multiply* and answer **Q10 (p. 22)**, and listen to the podcast (QR code) with Jen Wilkin and JT English regarding the story for which the Tabernacle was designed to tell.

PUT INTO ACTION

Invitation to Receive: The final step to 3 Circle training, the turning everyday conversations into gospel conversations, is the invitation to receive.

After presenting the gospel, a possible next question is ***“So where do you see yourself, in God’s Design or Brokenness?”*** If they say brokenness, ask them ***“Is there is any reason you would not believe in Jesus and receive this gospel at this time?”*** This is the invitation to receive.

Responses: In Acts 17, the Apostle Paul is teaching about God who has “*given assurance to all by raising Jesus from the dead*” (Acts 17:31). To this, the audience responds in three ways, the same possible answers you will receive when sharing about Jesus and inviting someone to receive the gospel.

1) GREEN LIGHT: ***“Some believed”*** (Acts 17:34). They say **‘Yes’** to Jesus. This is where you can remind them of Romans 10:9, confess and believe. Then model a short prayer acknowledging repentance, forgiveness, lordship of Jesus, and confession of belief.

2) YELLOW LIGHT: ***“We will hear you again about this”*** (Acts 17:32b). They say **‘Not Yet’** to Jesus. This response can often be a well thought out decision of needing to ask more questions and get more understanding. This is a perfect opportunity to continue meeting with them, especially since research shows up to 61% of non-Christians are willing to study the Bible with a friend.²

3) RED LIGHT: ***“Some mocked”*** (Acts 17:32a). They say **‘No’** to Jesus and can sometimes be negative or harsh. Respond graciously to them. There is no need to argue, debate, or engage in apologetics as if you are playing the next move in an evangelism chess match. Thank them for listening and let them know you are always available. If a friendship, continue to love and serve them as you have.



² Scroggins, Jerry, and Steve Wright. *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations*, (Brentwood, TN: B&H Publishing, 2016), 98.

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT NINETEEN

Always Ready to Confront Idolatry (Acts 19:21-40)

“And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods.” – Acts 19:26

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 19:21-40 / Reflect Daily on Acts 19:26
- Review “The Kingdom of God” (*Multiply*, 223-235)
- Listen to or Read Simply Put’s *Kingdom of God* via QR →



PURPOSE: *Idolatry – The worship, extreme admiration, love, or reverence of idols; something or someone* (Oxford Dictionary).

The focus of unit nineteen is the understanding that idol worship is central to the rejection of the gospel message and is often the most debilitating impairment to a Christian’s testimony. A believer should always be ready to confront idolatry and reject it in their own heart.

Similar to the confrontation in Philippi, Paul and his companions were charged with “*no little disturbance*” (Acts 19:23) in Ephesus. And similar to the reason of most disturbances, the catalyst was how the gospel message disturbed the cultural fascination and dependency on idols and idol worship.

Whether one’s idol is the goddess Artemis, as in Ephesus, or financial profits at the sake of others, as in Philippi, or any of the pleasures of the flesh as seen throughout Rome, the call to follow Jesus and the acceptance of that call often hinges on the willingness to let loose of the idols in one’s life.

In the world’s eyes, idolatry is generally harmless, just worship and love what you want, even the no-name god as in Athens. But in the upside-down Kingdom economy, idolatry is very much rooted in original sin and always leads to death.

Of course, an understanding of the Kingdom of God is critical to making sense of the Kingdom economy. The *Multiply* reading, and the attached audio / transcript QR file, are intended to teach more on the Kingdom and aid in the discipleship process.

PONDER

1. Draw images or icons to represent past and present idols in your life?



2. Do you notice a trend or commonality to these idols? Has ‘self’ ever been an idol? Have you surrendered these idols at the foot of the cross?
3. While the worship of Artemis was an element of the outrage toward Christians in Ephesus, what do you notice in Acts 19:24-27 as the root of this outrage? How does 1 Timothy 6:10 speak into the warning against this “root?”
4. In 1 Corinthians 14:33, what does Paul say about God? What does that imply about Acts 19:29, 32, and 40? How do idols still create this ‘state’ today?
5. What is the lesson in Acts 19:35-41 concerning those appointed to authority and used by God, regardless of their standing before God?
6. In God’s Kingdom, God’s people can turn from idolatry when they do what? (Hint: Exodus 20:3-5, Luke 10:27, Matthew 6:24).
7. Tabernacle theology was covered in the previous unit, and again in the **PUT INTO ACTION** of this unit. In the same way, the Kingdom of God is a common thread through God’s redemptive plan of the Bible. Read (**pp. 231-234**) in *Multiply* and answer **Q5 (p. 233)**.

PUT INTO ACTION

- Idolatry is a serious offense against God. God is jealous of anything or anyone we worship or love more than him. This is because he desires that we experience the fullness of his presence, and we cannot receive all that he has in store for us as spiritual blessings when we have divided loyalties.

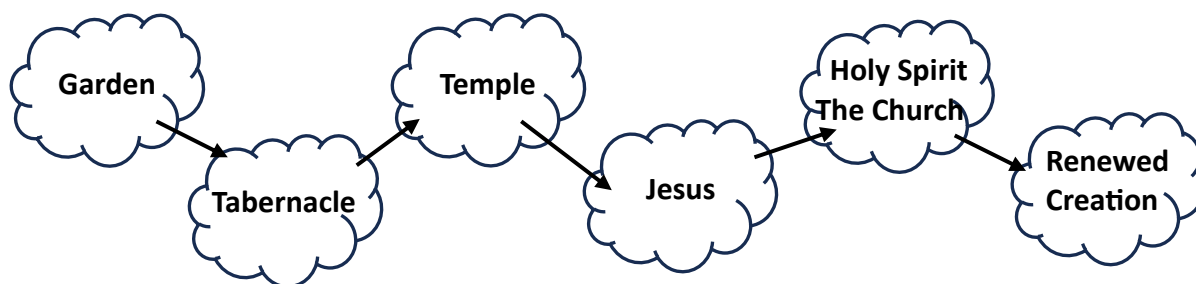
This week, get serious about idolatry in your life. Be free of the time and devotion you give idols. Give them the proper place of priority and admiration in your life. Sometimes, an idol can become a good gift in its proper place.

Fill in the following and personalize the sample prayer that follows.

- Of anything and anyone in my life, I am most in love with _____.
- If I had to give up one thing or one person in my life, I would be most devastated if it was _____.
- When it comes to _____ I spend too much time (resources, energy, emotion) knowing it is not helpful to living out my faith.

Pray as Led: *Almighty God, create in my heart a great love for you above all else. Prevent me from depending on anything that takes away from my dependency on you. Remind me that losing my relationship with you would be the most tragic thing to lose. Give me wisdom to minimize, or eliminate all together, my attraction to those things which consume me and offer you nothing in return. Help me steward my worship and be more Kingdom-minded in my sharing the good news and helping others grow in you. Amen.*

- Can you explain **Tabernacle Theology** (*Multiply*, unit 18) with the following:



“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.” – Matthew 6:24

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT TWENTY

Always Ready to Encourage Others in their Faith (Acts 20:17-38)

“But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” – Acts 20:24

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 20:17-38 / Reflect Daily on Acts 20:24
- Review “Exile / Promised Restoration” (*Multiply*, 237-249)
- Encourage Someone with DC Talk’s *Speak Life* via QR →



PURPOSE: Words of encouragement are generally not “one size fits all” when it comes to matters of faith and endurance. In unit twenty, Paul’s words of encouragement demonstrate the power of remembrance and the motivation of mission when instilling courage into a potentially discouraging situation.

Unit twenty is meant to examine the words of Paul to the elders of the church of Ephesus, an encouraging and impactful farewell speech given prior to his departure. Undoubtedly, recollection of Paul’s faithfulness in ministry, as retold in this passage, would spur others to similar acts of ministry and gospel mission faithfulness.

In Acts 20:18-35, Paul reminds his listeners of the work God had enabled through him in furthering the gospel. The noticeable thing in what Paul was saying is that within the reminders are teachable moments, in doctrine and practice. This unit will demonstrate the importance of intentional encouragement with helpful and teachable insight, a great example of “iron sharpening iron” (Proverbs 27:17).

Additionally, remembering God’s work in the past is a regular theme of God’s people throughout Scripture. It was not only commanded of the Israelites in the Old Testament, but it is also part of worship and evangelism in the New Testament.

In *Multiply* for this unit, the content looks at one of the most memorable ways for which God kept his promises, even as some had feared he had broken them – the Exile to Babylon. The encouragement of God keeping his word before, throughout, and after the Exile continues to bring courage to God’s people today, including those waiting on a second advent and final deliverance.

PONDER

1. Has anyone ever spoken “life” into you through encouraging, heartfelt words? Describe what was said and how it impacted you.
2. Paul’s departing words of encouragement can be categorized into sections with various purposes and points. For each of the following sections, give it a title, as in an outline, and identify at least one message for the section? Consider how that message would be encouraging to other believers.

Acts 20:18-21 “_____”

The message is:

Acts 20:22-24 “_____”

The message is:

Acts 20:25-32 “_____”

The message is:

Acts 20:33-35 “_____”

The message is:

3. Looking at the outline of Paul’s speech in Q2, what are a few of the applications that believers today can utilize for encouragement? What is one application you can take away from Paul’s speech?
4. Describe the scene in Acts 20:36-38? What does the scene say about Paul? About the early followers of Jesus? About the early Church mission?
5. God’s plan of salvation appears to be in jeopardy. How can the people of God be encouraged that the Kingdom promise will be fulfilled. Read (pp. 244-249) in *Multiply* and answer *Q8 (p. 249)*.

PUT INTO ACTION

- Who do you know that needs to be encouraged in their faith? They are discouraged for any number of reasons and would benefit from you speaking life into their circumstances. Explain and describe what you will do to encourage them with the hope of the gospel, as the hands and feet of Jesus.
- **Personal Testimony:** At some point, when an everyday conversation has been turned into a gospel conversation, you will have the wonderful privilege of sharing your personal testimony. This is not only an opportunity for great encouragement, but an invaluable part of a complete gospel discussion.

Over the next few units, you will put into action some ideas for crafting that testimony in a way that will be most helpful and engaging, not as a testimony of yourself, but as one of God's goodness and presence in your life.

For now, pray for interactions that are receptive to hearing YOUR good news story, and in the space below, write down whatever comes to mind when you hear the phrase, "**Would you share your personal testimony?**" Are you excited, frightened, uncertain? How do you view your testimony within the greater purpose of evangelism and helping others grow in discipleship?

*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.
– 1 Thessalonians 5:11*

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT TWENTY-ONE

Always Ready to Share Your Story (Acts 22:1-21)

“I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’” – Acts 22:6-8

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- **Read Acts 22:1-21 / Reflect Daily on Acts 22:6-8**
- **Review “Jesus the Messiah” (*Multiply*, 251-264)**
- **Begin to Formulate Your Story (Personal Testimony)**

PURPOSE: God has given believers a story, a personal testimony to share as evidence of the gospel’s life-giving power, and a reminder to themselves of the transformation that has taken place in their own heart because of Jesus.

Unit twenty-one is meant to examine the testimony of Paul to the people in Jerusalem, the story of a past life, an encounter with Jesus, and an ongoing mission.

Throughout Acts 22, Paul reminds his listeners of how unlikely he was to have ever received the gospel of Jesus Christ. That he was a former persecutor of “The Way” (a description of those who followed the way of salvation in Jesus) made his story of transformation an especially inspiring and engaging testimony of God’s grace.

And while Paul’s testimony consisted of a life-changing encounter with the risen Lord, the fact is most believers don’t have such “incredible” stories to tell. However, this unit reinforces the fact that every single gospel testimony involves a lost soul repenting, believing, and receiving the assurance of salvation. All conversion stories are grounded in the reality of a depraved, fallen, sinful heart being redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and restored from brokenness, and that’s worth sharing!

In *Multiply* for this unit, the narrative of God’s salvation plan, as described throughout Scripture, enters the New Testament. God’s presence dwells in the flesh as the fully Divine, fully human Jesus. The promise of restoration is moving toward a high point in the plan, the revelation of the Messiah and a way for all people to be reconciled to God.

PONDER

1. Do you recall the most impactful life testimony you have ever heard? How did it impact you? What about it has stuck with you?
2. Much as the encouragement to the elders in Acts 20, Paul's testimony in Jerusalem consists of parts, or sections, around an overall structure. For each of the following parts, give a title, as in an outline, and identify at least one lesson you might take from that section and apply in your own life.

Acts 22:3-5 “ _____ ”

Life application is:

Acts 22:6-11 “ _____ ”

Life application is:

Acts 22:12-16 “ _____ ”

Life application is:

Acts 20:17-21 “ _____ ”

Life application is:

3. Looking at the outline of Paul's personal testimony in Q2, what part of his story resonates with you? How do you picture someone today who is living in a similar way as pre-conversion Paul? Is it someone you would pray for or ever imagine they might one day have an encounter with Jesus?
4. Do all believers have a responsibility to the instructions Paul was given in Acts 22:15? Why or why not? If this was asked of you, what would you do?
5. Testimonies of faith are only possible because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, Messiah. To learn about the arrival and Messiahship of Jesus, read (pp. 254-259) in *Multiply* and answer **Q3 & Q4** (p. 257).

PUT INTO ACTION

Personal Testimony: When asked the reason for the hope that is in you, one way to always be ready to answer is to share your own personal experience of repentance, confession, and belief. In the next few units, the **PUT INTO ACTION** section will help you develop and practice a short, personal testimony of when and how and why you became a follower of Jesus Christ.

Importantly, never forget that a personal testimony is about your story, or journey to and of faith, and it is not intended to be an apologetic of Christian doctrine or a theological training session. It is utilized outside of the gospel presentation and is primarily a way for which your experiences bring credibility and understanding to why you believe your hope in Jesus is well-placed.

The following steps will help you get started. They are based on the Journey Discipleship material from Perimeter Church and Randy Pope³:

1. **Think & Scribble:** Begin to think, write, scribble, or draw as you focus on life before Jesus and what knowing him means to you. Don't worry about organizing all your thoughts; just try to get them all on paper. There are some prompts and a sample testimony on the following page to help you begin.
2. **Review Testimony Tips:** On the pages that follow are tips to help you organize your thoughts and write your testimony in a clear and engaging way.
3. **Draft & Write :** Begin crafting your testimony. Keep it short! Focus on the main points so you will be able to tell your story in one-to-three minutes. If you can do this, you will have no problem sharing more details in conversation when you have the opportunity and/or are asked follow-up questions.
4. **Practice Telling it Naturally:** Ensure your testimony doesn't sound like a formal presentation, because it's NOT! This is your *3 Circles Repent, Receive, Recover, and Pursue* experience. If your testimony sounds weird to your ears, practice telling it until you can say it in a casual, conversational style.
5. **Share it with Friends, Family Members, & in Small Groups:** Receive feedback and coaching that will help you tell your story more effectively.

Again, your testimony will most likely be called upon when others have questions, or you have the distinct opportunity to speak life into a situation and the Lord gives you the words for encouragement and hope. Always be ready!

³ Pope, Randy. *Journey Curriculum* (Johns Creek, GA: Perimeter Church Publishing, 1996), 197.

Personal Testimony: Example

“I was born and raised in a family that assumed they were Christians. So, as I grew up, I assumed I was a Christian as well, until a few years later.

I met a group of students who were living a life that was different than mine. I went to church like they did, but they didn’t talk about church and religion as much as they talked about a relationship with God that could be found through the person of Jesus Christ. I began to investigate by attending church and other activities with them to learn more about what they were talking about.

There I began to understand what is called the gospel, the good news that Christ did for us what we can’t do for ourselves. He died to pay the penalty that needed to be paid for my own sins, so that by receiving him, I could have a new life and relationship with God. I came to a place where my heart was surrendered to him, and I began to follow him.

Right away, I noticed changes in my life, like peace that I didn’t know and new hope about life. I knew I was a different person, and I had assurance that if I died, I would be okay. My life kept growing and changing from that point on.”

Personal Testimony: Prompts to Consider

How has my life changed since becoming a follower of Christ? What has Jesus done for me? How has being a Christian answered my questions about life? What do I enjoy most about being a follower of Jesus? What was I searching for before Jesus?

Personal Testimony: Scribble Thoughts

Personal Testimony: Tips & Suggestions

- Organize your testimony around this simple outline. You may choose to modify the outline if you want to emphasize or de-emphasize a certain point.
 1. Before I became a Christian (my outlook, my life, my search)
 2. How I became a Christian (when, guided by whom, what clicked)
 3. Since I became a Christian (my outlook, my life, my search)
- Write your testimony in the way you naturally speak. You aren't presenting a report or preaching a sermon.
- If you choose to quote Scripture, only use a verse or two that relates to the central point of your story and wouldn't require explanation for it to be understood. You may want to paraphrase the verse by using common phrases rather than quoting, i.e. "This passage in the Bible says God made a way ..."
- Avoid Christian jargon (e.g. saved, lost, born again, converted, etc.). These words don't always communicate what you intend.
- Remember that most people you meet will say they believe in God, so you will want to talk about trusting or following Jesus, rather than a general belief.
- Emphasize why you believe Jesus is real and relevant in your life.
- Avoid talking about any church, denomination, or Christian group in a derogatory way.
- Avoid giving the false impression that the Christian life is trouble-free.
- Practice telling your story out loud. If you can't say it in the way you naturally speak in about 90 seconds +/-, then it's too long.
- Ask yourself if your testimony would connect with someone on a personal level so that they could identify with your story.

And Jesus said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." – Mark 5:19

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT TWENTY-TWO

Always Ready to See Lives Transformed (Acts 26:1-23)

“The Lord said, ‘I am sending you to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’” – Acts 26:18

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 26:1-23 / Reflect Daily on Acts 26:18
- Review “The Great Commission” (*Multiply*, 267-276)
- Watch Radical’s *The Great Commission* via the QR →



PURPOSE: The message of unit twenty-two is straightforward and simple, yet it is the message for which the entire weight of that two-sided coin of gospel sharing and discipleship hinges. It is the message of God’s people being a sent people.

More directly, the purpose of this unit is to be encouraged by the testimony and mission of Paul, a mission for which God clearly ordained and directly instructed. It is the sending mission.

In Acts 26, the Apostle Paul summarizes his pre-conversion life with an emphasis on his opposition to the name of Jesus and his persecution of those who followed Jesus, who in his eyes were blasphemers and traitors to the Jewish faith.

Paul then speaks to his conversion experience with an emphasis on the blinding light used by the Lord to open his eyes to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This then becomes central to his post-conversion purpose, as the Lord directs him to “*open the eyes*” of the spiritually blind Gentiles, that they might know forgiveness of sins through Jesus.

With this passage as the backdrop to the unit, the questions are intended to call every believer to a realization of their own “commissioned” status, and to see themselves as directed by God to be used in opening eyes and shining light into darkness.

Finally, the video clip and the *Multiply* content share the same authors and theme, the fulfillment of the Great Commission, a final earthly command of Jesus for his followers to ... *go, be sent, make disciples by sharing the gospel and teaching them about me, what it means to be my disciple and become more like me.*

PONDER

1. Describe any recollection of when your spiritual eyes were opened to the gospel and you more clearly saw the work of Jesus on the cross, the empty tomb, the need to repent and receive his Lordship? (Note: This isn't necessarily a Damascus Road experience, perhaps it was over time, or even a moment within your maturity as a follower of Christ).
2. Explain Paul's situation in Acts 26, including who he is standing before and why. You might need to review the previous chapters for context, and make sure to reference Acts 9:15 for further revelation.
3. This is the third time Paul shares his personal testimony in Scripture. In light of the situation, what is unique to what and how Paul shares compared to prior occasions? What does that say about testimony context and adaptation?
4. Acts 26:8 is an interesting question to King Agrippa. Why could Paul ask such a probing question? Notice the commentary it follows in Acts 26:6-7.
5. What is the meaning of Paul's declaration in Acts 26:22-23? What is the application to your own daily mission of being sent into the world?
6. This *Always Ready* study is purposed to emphasize the mandates of gospel sharing and disciple making. In *Multiply* for this unit, the storyline of the Bible has now arrived at the impetus for these mandates, the Great Commission. Learn more and give thought to this assignment by reading (pp. 270-275) and answering *Q5* (p. 273) & *Q8* (p. 275).

PUT INTO ACTION

Personal Testimony: In unit twenty-one, you were encouraged to think about your own personal testimony, as modeled by the many examples of Paul throughout Acts. As you thought about various elements of your pre-conversion, conversion, and post-conversion life, you were asked to scribble out those thoughts, with no rhyme or reason, just get it on paper and let it sit until this unit.

This week, with your scribbled thoughts in hand, and if need be, refreshing yourself on the tips and suggestions for a personal testimony (provided in the previous unit), you will begin to create some structure. Use the space below to write out your testimony. Don't overthink it, let it be a natural telling of your story.

Before I became a Christian: _____

How I became a Christian: _____

Since I became a Christian: _____

“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” – John 20:21


PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT TWENTY-THREE

Always Ready to Trust in God's Sovereignty (Acts 27:13-44)

“Take heart, I have faith in God it will be exactly as I have been told.” – Acts 27:25

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 27:13-44 / Reflect Daily on Acts 27:25
- Review “The Spirit of God” (*Multiply*, 279-287)
- Watch Ligon Duncan’s *What Does the Sovereignty of God Mean?* via the QR 
- Attend Share the Hope Day

PURPOSE: Unit twenty-three presents what appears to be just another speedbump in the travels of Paul – a storm at sea and eventual shipwreck. However, within the details of what was certainly a harrowing experience is a lesson of trusting in God’s sovereignty, his all-knowing, all-being, all-powerful control of this world.

For purpose, this unit will introduce the sovereignty of God as an attribute of God for which believers can find great comfort and hope. Additionally, the questions provided will ask readers to reflect on what sovereignty means in light of free will.

As it relates to the dual purposes of evangelism and equipping, once again God’s Word speaks into both mandates. In discipleship, growing in an understanding of sovereignty, to the point of total reliance and trust, is essential to spiritual growth. And in sharing the gospel, the sovereignty of God means his fulfillment of salvation cannot be undone, his plans cannot be denied, and his timing is perfect.

Just as Paul was certain the others should have faith in the plans he shared because it would be “*exactly*” as God had said, believers can have faith in the entirety of God’s redemptive plan in Scripture, because it will be “*exactly*” as God has said.

To better understand the biblical teaching of God’s sovereign nature, the attached video clip provides a short lesson from Ligon Duncan that references Acts 27.

Finally, in *Multiply*, the storyline transitions to the tabernacle of God’s presence through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Often the vehicle of God’s plan at work, the Spirit is an ever-present Helper in sharing the gospel and coming alongside others.

PONDER

1. When was the last time you said, “God is in control?” What did you mean? And did you really mean it? Why or why not?
2. What are the implications of trusting fully in God’s sovereignty?
3. Use the passage in Acts 27:21-26, as well as Lamentations 3:37-39, Isaiah 45:7-9, Matthew 10:29-31, Romans 8:28, and Ephesians 1:11 to formulate a short response to the following.

The biblical definition for the “sovereignty of God” is ...

4. If God is fully sovereign, what is the responsibility of individuals? How do you explain human freedom within the lens of “God is in control?” How might Acts 27:22 and/or Acts 27:31 speak into this?
5. Listen to the six-minute teaching by Ligon Duncan on what it means for God to be sovereign. Was anything helpful to your understanding? If so, what was it and how was it helpful?
6. The indwelling Holy Spirit, the presence of God in us, is our Helper, Guide, Discerning Voice for aligning with God’s will and living freely and confidently within God’s sovereign plan. Learn more about the Spirit’s presence and purpose in *Multiply*, (pp. 281-287) and answering *Q6* (p. 286).

PUT INTO ACTION

- **Share the Hope Day:** Think of it as Community Day with an Always Ready intentionality. The details of this event will be shared from multiple channels. Learn more and join other disciples in hosting, serving, loving, feeding, and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with our community neighbors.

In preparation for **Share the Hope**, we encourage everyone (individuals, families, small groups, ministries) to revisit the 3 Circles training from this past year. If you haven't already had the opportunity to present the good news of **God's Design**, the bad news of **Brokenness**, and the best news of the **Gospel**, now is the time to ask questions, take it to heart, and prepare to introduce someone to the hope of restoring relationship with God.

Finally, for reflection and discussion, what does it mean that *Share the Hope* is NOT an evangelism event, but simply another day of missional living? How does this perspective change how you view the set aside day, and how you view the other 364 days without designated activities?

- **Personal Testimony:** You have scribbled, crafted drafts, and now you are always ready for the opportunity to share your testimony. With another believer (family, friends, group) share your 1-to-3-minute testimony as you might with a non-Christian. Then, journal a few notes below on how your testimony has changed or developed in the past several units. What is most on your mind as it relates to the opportunity to share it for God's glory and praise?

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. – Colossians 1:16-17

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT TWENTY-FOUR

Always Ready in Any Circumstance (Acts 28:11-31)

From morning till evening, he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and the Prophets. Some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. – Acts 28:23-24

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Acts 28:11-31 / Reflect Daily on Acts 28:23-24
- Review “Good News for All Nations” (*Multiply*, 303-312)
- Watch Tony Evan’s *Gospel Presentation* via the QR —→



PURPOSE: As a final act in the book of Acts, unit twenty-four will close the account of Paul’s missionary travel to Rome, and as only fitting, conclude with an emphasis on preaching, teaching, sharing, presenting, discussing, and living out the gospel of Jesus Christ, despite any circumstance.

In Acts 28, Paul arrives in Rome and is soon under house arrest awaiting an audience with Caesar. With the possibility of death pending, confined day and night to the room of a rented apartment, and under great suspicion from both Romans and Jews, Paul did the only natural and profitable thing he could – share the gospel of Jesus Christ all day, every day, to whoever walked through the door.

When not sharing the gospel and teaching those who came to hear about Jesus, Paul spent time encouraging other believers. He was making disciples in person and through his letters, of which those to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon were written during these two years in Rome.

Unit twenty-four also stresses key learnings found throughout Acts about evangelism and discipleship. For example, in Acts 28:24, the reality of some believing and some rejecting the gospel is made clear. Also, in Acts 28:22, the readiness to share at any time when asked about Jesus is demonstrated.

Complementing Acts 28 is a short gospel presentation from Dr. Tony Evans, available in the video link, and in *Multiply*, the question “**Is Jesus your personal Savior?**” is explored as good news for all the nations.

PONDER

1. Since Paul's arrest in Acts 21, it has been an especially trying time for the apostle. The hearings, the barracks, a plot to kill him, misadventures at sea, and now waiting in Rome for a trial. However, what has actually happened through Paul? Do you find opportunity in all circumstances?
2. What is the "*hope of Israel*" mentioned in Acts 28:20 for which Paul was put in chains? (See also Acts 26:6). How does it relate to "*the hope that is within you,*" if you are follower of Jesus?
3. Acts 28:23 is another example of a consistent theme found throughout all the New Testament and early Church, what is it? How do you / the Church make application of this theme today?
4. What is your reaction, if any, to Acts 28:30-31? Be honest, how would someone observe your life and complete the following:

For the past several years, (insert your name) has been consumed with

in all their free time, resources, and conversations. This is his/her legacy!
5. What would it take for the observation in Q4 to more closely resemble that of Paul in Acts 28:31 in our life? Is it discipleship, motivation, purpose, prayer, accountability, love, desire, confidence, opportunities, or what?
6. Is Jesus your personal Savior - Yes / No? What does that mean to you? Read about Jesus as the Savior for all nations and all people in *Multiply*, (pp. 309-313) and answering *Q5* (p. 310) and *Q8* (p. 313).

PUT INTO ACTION

Is Jesus your Personal Savior? On the believer side of having received and confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior, this question appears straightforward and easy to understand. But to someone who is not in relationship with God, this question might as well be one about high-level calculus, described through ancient terminologies, asked in sign language. In other words, it is really hard to understand.

And beyond the religious language, unbelievers often have important questions to consider before they get around to answering the personal Savior one. Some of them are provided below for you to answer, consider, discuss, share, and think about.

- Why do I need a Savior? I'm doing pretty good; I don't need saving.
- What am I being saved to? And how do you know?
- But what about other gods and religions – don't they save you from something either here or in the afterlife? What makes Jesus the best?
- I've heard about the Bible, is that all you are basing this on, because it was written a long time ago, like Greek mythology or something.
- So, I believe in the Old Testament, but not the Jesus of the New Testament, because there is really no connection, right?

Remember, the Holy Spirit goes before you and the best answers are the genuine, truthful ones given in gentleness out of a relational gospel conversation. The *"I can't give you a helpful answer on that, but I will get with others who can and get back with you – thanks for asking,"* is much better than misleading someone, ignoring their question, or becoming defensive. Remember, the Holy Spirit goes before you.

Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. – 2 Timothy 4:2

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

UNIT TWENTY-FIVE

Always Ready with an Eternal Perspective (Revelation 21:1-8, 22-27)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.” – Revelation 21:3

PLAN: To get the most from this unit, complete the following.

- Read Revelation 21 / Reflect Daily on Revelation 21:3
- Review “The End of the Story” (*Multiply*, 315-328)
- Watch Radical’s *End of the Story* via the QR —————→



PURPOSE: The final unit in *Always Ready* is intended to help followers of Jesus keep an eternal perspective throughout this temporal earthly journey. An always ready perspective of eternal, heavenly things can provide great hope while traveling a broken world. It should also bring great urgency for those captives to brokenness.

The end of the story is truly the beginning of the end. The end of suffering, violence, pain, and all forms of sin. It is the beginning of the end of waiting for King Jesus’ return, and the beginning of the end, tragically, for opportunity to receive the gospel.

Revelation 21 also speaks to a final tabernacle dwelling of God relative to his people. Having progressed in various forms of presence throughout the unveiling of his redemptive plan in Scripture, here in Revelation 21:22, it is written, “*There was no temple in this new city for its temple is the Lord God.*” God, once again, dwells directly with his people; a return to his garden design.

In *Multiply*, God’s plan to restore all things to himself speaks to majesty and mission. The New Heavens and New Earth remind us that the view is worth the climb, while the words of Jesus in Revelation 22:7, “*Behold, I (Jesus) am coming soon,*” are hopeful to the redeemed, and cautionary for those not having confessed and received.

The **PUT INTO ACTION** for this unit provides recommendations for “*Next Steps*” for seeking to grow in the always ready state of evangelism and disciple making. It also reinforces an always ready gospel answer for the hope that is within you, an answer that the risen, Messiah Jesus, who is coming again, HE is the reason!

PONDER

1. When you think of the book of Revelation, do you most often associate it as the end of the story, or the beginning of the story? The beginning of the end, or the end of the beginning? Why do you think of it the way you do?
2. Building on Q1, when you think of Revelation, do you most often associate it with celebrating the great hope of Heaven for yourself and other believers, or with great concern for those who reject Jesus? Why do you think of this way?
3. In Revelation 21:1-7, what echoes of Genesis 1-3 do you hear?
4. What is your understanding of Revelation 21:8? What does it mean in terms of a real judgment? What is the worst part of a second “death” if Genesis 2:17 and Genesis 3:23 are any indication?
5. Conversely, what is the key component of eternal “life” found in Revelation 21:22-27? How do you summarize the biblical meaning of eternal life?
6. This vision of a New Heaven and New Earth is explored further in *Multiply*; read (pp. 318-322) and answer *Q8* (p. 327).

PUT INTO ACTION

What Next? Thank you for staying the course and faithfully completing *Always Ready*.?! We are prayerful and hopeful that readiness to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and come alongside others in the discipleship process is more than a statement, less of a question, and is a certain exclamation of your life and faith.

Before offering a few suggestions and words of encouragement for moving forward, let's revisit the very first question from unit one. Answer in all honesty and then compare it to the answer you provided in that first unit.

- How “**ready**” are you to share the gospel?



The fields are ripe for the harvest, yet how are the lost and broken in the field supposed to know the One who can restore their brokenness unless they are told. And how can they be told unless disciples of Jesus go and tell.

The call to discipleship and evangelism is a life-long endeavor, it doesn't end when the small groups take a break, or the Bible study workbook is filled out. In this next season of equipping and sharing the gospel consider the following:

- Be a disciple who makes disciples. ***Who are you discipling right now?***
- Pursue a hope-filled, gospel-modeled life worthy of being asked, ***“What makes your life so different?”***
- Read, study, and meditate on God's Word. It is the necessary recipe for making disciples and responding to unbelievers in truth and grace.
- Be attentive and ready for turning everyday conversations into gospel conversations. Share the 3 Circles gospeling tool with others and encourage others with your personal testimony.
- Pray for the lost in your life, those for whom you already have a relationship and credibility. May the Lord open their hearts to his good news.

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. – Philippians 3:19-20

PRAYERS, NOTES, & THOUGHTS

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