

ACTS

OF THE APOSTLES

Oct. 31 – Nov. 1
Lesson 8

Move Beyond Your Bubble: To the Different

This Discussion Guide should be used the week following the sermon it supplements, but members can still interact even if they missed the sermon. To use this guide in your Community Group, try to work through the questions on your own before you meet. You might not get to all of the questions, and that's okay. If your Community Group does not meet one week, walk through the guide on your own so that you can stay in sync with the series.

MAIN TEXT: Acts 8

SUMMARY OF THE SERIES: The Acts of the Apostles describes the beginning of the church missional movement that was started by the resurrected Jesus. Most importantly, the church's power and strength comes from the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit, the church ceases to be the church. Followers of Jesus have the Holy Spirit at conversion and receive a new nature, but Acts shows us how we need continual filling of the Holy Spirit to be the church engaged on mission. Of course, we can't manufacture this but need to put ourselves in a position of asking and waiting for the Spirit. Expectation without agenda. And we need to be entering people's world's listening to them, and knowing when to bring the healing words of Jesus and good news of the Kingdom to others if we are to be engaged on mission.

GETTING STARTED

We are all busy in life. If we aren't careful, as Christians, we can stay within our "Christian bubble." This means we are surrounded by Christian activities, people, and even that which is only in our comfort zone. So, we stay in a bubble and do not beyond it, even to those different than us. When you think about where you live, work, study, and play, who are the "different" people around you that are not Christians and may not think, act, or look like you?

DISCUSSING THE WORD

1. Read Acts 8:1-5. Persecution broke out where the church started in Jerusalem, and they scatter. Phillip goes to Samaria, a people very different from him as a Hebrew. In fact, Hebrew people looked down on those from Samaria for a variety of reasons. Why do you think Phillip moved toward them? What would have happened if Phillip didn't go to them (you need to really imagine on this one!)? Now, think through the people in your life. Play out what could happen if you don't move toward them with the love and word of Jesus?
2. Read v. 6-8. How does Phillip introduce the Samaritans to the person and power of Jesus? Realize that Phillip is just an ordinary guy like you and me, and used the mode of communication (speaking in public which was how things were communicated back then) of that day. What about Phillip's ministry is difficult for you to put into practice? How did Phillip's actions aid in what he said? Why is this important to remember as you move others to Jesus?
3. Read v.14-17 Being filled with the Holy Spirit is a central theme in the book of Acts. God wants people to experience Him, not just know theoretically about Him. How does being filled with the Spirit enable us to be His witnesses?

BOOKS & RESOURCES

Walking by the Spirit by A.B. Simpson

Rise of the Nones by James Emery White

Sentness by Kim Hammond and Darrin Cronshaw

MISSIONAL RESPONSE TO GOD

1. Think of 2 friends who haven't experience life-change through Jesus. Write them down on a piece of paper and commit to pray for them.
2. Pray for opportunities to get to know them and pray for the filling of God's Spirit for boldness to enter into their pain, their world, their interests, their reality so that you can earn the right to speak into their heart and soul.
3. Invest in getting to know them. Think through these ideas:
 - Is there a need? Then fill it.
 - Is there a hurt? Then heal it.
 - Is there a common interest? Then do it.
4. When God's timing allows, invite them to a Worship Service, Alpha, or any other type of church gathering.

PERSONAL RESPONSE TO GOD

Take the Spiritual Growth Assessment!

A follower of Jesus should be growing spiritually to become more like Jesus. However, sometimes we do not know where we need to grow, or we do not go deep enough with where transformation needs to take place. Or sometimes we feel spiritually stagnated or stuck.

Just as many of us go to the doctor's office to get a baseline health assessment and routine check-ups for our physical and mental health, our spiritual health and total well-being is equally important. This assessment is merely a tool to help you assess the depth of your relationship with God and where you need to grow. Honesty is key. Going deep in your relationship with God is the goal.

As you complete the assessment, avoid rushing. Listen for God's voice to encourage and challenge you. Consider this experience as one-on-one time with Him. Be intentional in your growth towards Christlikeness. The answers you give will be helpful for you to understand where you need to grow and you will be able to develop your own personal plan.

You can access the Assessment on the Adult Ministries web page.