



## **The Life of Paul**

### **A Study of the Book of Acts**

Sermon messages by Dr. Jim Congdon

#### **Who was Paul?**

Was he “the true founder of Christianity” (as the ABC documentaries attest)? Or was he “a woman-hating chauvinist” (as modern feminism would have you believe)? Or was he “an anti-Semite who painted all Jews as legalists” (according to modern Judaism)?

Wayne Meeks of Yale University is correct with he writes that “next to Jesus, Paul is the most intriguing figure in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.” But Paul is also a man for all centuries. You may not know it, but next to Jesus, no biblical person has had a greater influence on your life.

In this sermon series, Dr. Jim Congdon, Senior Pastor of Topeka Bible Church traces the story from Saul the child to Paul the adult. You’ll learn that Paul was a brilliant Scholar, a murderous Inquisitor, a passionate Apostle, and the world’s greatest Evangelist!

#### **This Study Guide**

Journey with us through the book of Acts as we study the life of the church’s greatest missionary. The following Study Guide is intended to immerse you into God’s word while you follow “The Life of Paul.” These questions are intended to be answered after you listen to each sermon. Each lesson is geared to take you deeper into the Scriptures and can be done either individually or in a group setting (such as a Community Group or Bible Study).

At the conclusion of this study, we hope that you will be able to say as Paul did, “Follow me as I follow Christ” (*1 Corinthians 11:1*) and “For me to live is Christ, to die is gain” (*Philippians 1:21*).

Topeka Bible Church  
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# Community Groups |

Growing UP | Growing WITH | Growing OUT



*"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup>And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. <sup>25</sup>Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching." – Hebrews 10:23-25 (NIV)*

## Why Community Groups?

Because God created us to live life in the context of relationships! This is an opportunity for you to connect with others as your experience real life-change in your Christian walk.

## What is a Community Group?

A group of 6-10 people who "do life" together as they grow in their love for God, His word, and others. Community Groups encourage folks to take their "next step" in three areas: (1) **Spiritual Growth – UP** towards God, (2) **Relational Growth – WITH** Group members, and (3) **Missional Growth – OUT** to those in the church and world.

Thus, a Community Group is an environment where we are conformed more and more into the image of Jesus Christ (*Romans 8:29-30*). Our conviction is that "real life-change only happens in the context of biblical community."

Not to be left out is the fact that a Community Group is also a place for folks to have fun as they celebrate and share life together! Come join us!

If you have more questions about Community Groups at TBC, please contact:



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**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 1:**  
**“Let Me Introduce You to Paul”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**

**Acts 22:3-5, 27-28; 23:6; Galatians 1:14 (Acts 5:34); Acts 26:4-5, 9-11**

1. Paul was born into a life of privilege not only as a Roman citizen (Acts 22:27-28), but more specifically as a young Jewish man. As you think about some of the benefits that he enjoyed (Philippians 3:3-6), why is it difficult for people who experience worldly success and privilege to be used by God for the purposes of advancing His Kingdom?
  
2. Now imagine Paul's upbringing as a devout Jewish boy (Acts 23:6). How might his life experience been different from others because of his elite Jewish upbringing? What circumstances in your life have made you feel different or alienated from your peers?
  
3. Noting Acts 5:34ff, what was the significance of Paul's being educated by Gamaliel (cf. Acts 22:3)? Do you think it's harder for highly educated people to believe in Christ? Why or why not? Do you know any highly intelligent people who have become Christians in college or later in life?
  
4. Considering Galatians 1:14, who are the most passionate people that you know (non-Christians or Christians)? Do you admire them? Why is it often difficult for non-Christians of passionate conviction to come to Christ? Do you know any passionate people who have become Christians later in life? If so, describe some of their story.

5. Just as Paul had great "confidence in the flesh" (*Philippians 3:4*) when he thought of his past, how are you finding confidence, significance, or identity in the things of your past that have brought you significant success? How might this be hindering you from being fully used by God in the present?
  
6. What experiences have you undergone in your life that, even as you look back, seem to have absolutely no meaning or value? What does *Romans 8:28* tell us about our experiences if we are believers? The life of Paul tells us that "no experience is too \_\_\_\_\_ for God to use."
  
7. Read *1 Timothy 1:12-16*. Based on God's abundant grace, what was Paul's perspective on his present in light of his past? Why do you think he still considered himself to be the "foremost" of sinners (*1 Timothy 1:15*)? Do you recognize your own sinfulness? Have you accepted God's abundant grace that gives you a significant purpose in the present and an incredible hope in the future?

**Memory Verse:**

**"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."  
(Romans 8:28, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 2:**  
**"The Conversion of Paul"**

**Community Group Study Questions**

**Acts 7:58; 9:1-8; 26:10-11 14-15; Galatians 1:13-14**

1. How would you describe the first mention of Paul (or "Saul") in the Scriptures (Acts 7:58)? What is the context? As a character in a play or drama, why do you think Luke introduces us to Paul in this way? What are your first impressions of him?
2. *Acts 26:10-11* and *Galatians 1:13-14* give us some more details about Paul's life and activities before he experienced salvation and became a follower of Jesus Christ. What are some of the things that he did to those who followed Christ?
3. Why did Paul need letters from the high priest for the synagogues (*Acts 9:1-2*)? What might be the significance of Luke's reference to those belonging to "the Way?"
4. Describe what you think Paul must have felt the moment he encountered Jesus Christ (*Acts 9:3-6*). Even though Paul had never personally met Jesus before, why did Christ say that Paul was persecuting Him? How does this communicate Christ's personal connection with His followers? Does this give you boldness?

5. Imagine how you would respond if you had encountered Christ the same way that Paul did. Now think back to when you actually did encounter Christ. Describe the days that followed in your own life. How did your life change? What did you think about that you hadn't thought of before?
  
6. Thinking about Paul's past before Christ and comparing it to how his life ended (in faithful service to the Savior), how does this help you deal with regrets or failures from your own past? Are you able to see God's promise for a blessed future in spite of your past? Why or why not?
  
7. Do you agree that conversion (or salvation) is a "God thing" and a "goad thing?" Why or why not? How might this point give you encouragement for those difficult people whom you'd love to see come to Christ? How might God use you in their lives to "goad" them onto Christ? Are you willing to be used?

**Memory Verses:**

**“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” (26:15) And I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.’”  
(Acts 26:14b-15, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 3:**  
**“Life with a Long-Range View”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 9:10-19a**

1. Ananias initially responded with a willingness to obey (Acts 9:10). Knowing Paul’s past, however, what do you think Ananias felt when he realized what God was asking him to do (Acts 9:13)? What did Ananias eventually choose to do (Acts 9:17)?
  
2. Have you ever felt like you were totally unprepared for what God was bringing your way? In what ways might God surprise you at this stage in your Christian experience? How eager are you to obey God when He asks you to do the unexpected?
  
3. Luke includes an interesting detail in Acts 9:11 – Ananias was to go to “Straight street” to find Paul in Damascus. Why do you think he included this detail? What does this say about God’s attention to this matter? Does God guide us in similar way today? Why or why not?
  
4. Do you tend to be more socially independent, or socially connected? Does the Lord seem to be "forcing" any relationships on you right now just as He did on Paul and Ananias? How open are you to that?

5. Do you believe that you are a “chosen instrument” (Acts 9:15-16) of God’s who is charged to bear His name to others? Why or why not (see 1 Peter 2:11-12 for a hint)? How must Paul have felt once he realized that this was the life to which God called him? How willing are you to live out God’s call to proclaim the gospel in your everyday life?
  
6. How might Paul’s conversion comfort a concerned parent (or other authority figure)? Are you enduring a painful and apparently meaningless experience that might look entirely different in the long run, if God gets hold of it?
  
7. How does this passage expand your scope of God’s sovereignty and grace? Spend time this week prayerfully asking God to prepare you for the unexpected. Share with others as you process what this might mean for you.

**Memory Verses:**

**“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; (9:16) for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.’”**  
(Acts 9:15-16, NASB)



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 4:**  
**“The Hidden Price of Greatness”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 9:19b-30; 2 Corinthians 11:23-29;**  
**Galatians 1:17-18; 2 Timothy 3:10-12**

1. Imagine if Acts 9:16 had been written of you. What would your outlook on life be? How would you respond and why? How might this sort of suffering actually be beneficial to anyone?
  
2. Who were “the Jews” in Acts 9:23 and why did they want to kill or “do away” with Paul? Considering Paul’s continual encounters with these threats (see also Acts 9:29), is it possible that our boldness for Christ might also lead to our endangerment? Why or why not?
  
3. In each of the cases where Paul experienced persecution, how did the surrounding Christian community respond? How might we as the body of Christ similarly respond to those in our community or world who experience similar persecution or hardship?
  
4. Now read 2 Timothy 3:10-12. What does verse 12 promise those of us who follow Jesus Christ? Have you found this to be true of your life? If not, why might that be? Who rescued Paul from his persecutions (3:11) and how does this apply to your life currently?

5. Why did Paul spend “several days” with the Christians in Damascus? Why didn’t he immediately hit the streets with the news of the gospel after he regained his eyesight (as in Acts 9:20)?
  
6. What else does *Galatians 1:17-18* tell us about Paul’s preparation for ministry? Why do you think he waited *three years* before even going to Jerusalem? How might Paul’s times of waiting and solitude apply to your own growth experiences as a Christian?
  
7. Where might God allow you to experience suffering? How would you like to respond? Do you have plans to “pay the price of solitude” this year? What steps can you take to allow for some extended alone time with God?

**Memory Verses:**

**“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”**

**(2 Timothy 3:12, NIV)**

**“Now for several days he (Saul) was with the disciples who were at Damascus,”**

**(Acts 9:19b, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 5:**  
**“The Person Everyone (including God) Likes”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 4:32-37; 9:23-28; 11:19-26; 13:1-2, 13; 15:35-40**

1. Think about Barnabas’ sacrificial act in *Acts 4:36-37*. Why do you think he did this? When was the last time you gave sacrificially in order to help meet the needs of others within the church?
  
2. Why do you think Barnabas was able to speak effectively on behalf of Paul before the apostles (*Acts 9:26-27*)? If you were in Saul’s (Paul’s) shoes, how would this have impacted you? Are there currently any “Paul’s” in your life to whom you can reach out?
  
3. Why was Barnabas sent to the church in Antioch (*Acts 11:22*)? What actions did he take when he arrived in Antioch in *Acts 11:23*? How might you do the same in your spheres of influence this week?
  
4. Why might Barnabas have intentionally looked for Saul (Paul) in *Acts 11:25*? As you think about how Barnabas served as a “mentor” to Paul, who are the gifted folks in your life whom you can mentor and give opportunities to serve? What steps can you take to build more effectively into those relationships?

5. Barnabas and Saul (Paul) became a dynamic tandem for ministry in the first century. Who are the folks that you would consider partnering with in ministry here at TBC? How might God use you, your passion, and other ministry partners to further His Kingdom here on earth?
  
6. Have you ever experienced a sharp disagreement like Paul and Barnabas did in Acts 15:36-40? What happened? Were you eventually able to reconcile with the other party? What steps do you need to take to pursue this reconciliation?
  
7. To whom do you need to give a "second chance" like Barnabas did with John Mark (Acts 15:37, see also 2 Timothy 4:11)? Prayerfully consider how you might specifically be a "son (or daughter) of encouragement" to others this week and share this with your group.

**Memory Verse:**

**"But Barnabas took hold of him (Saul/Paul) and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus."  
(Acts 9:27, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 6:**  
**"He Walked a Crooked Mile"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 13:1-12**

1. The church at Antioch was by any standard a successful, growing, church. Does God appear to be satisfied with that? By setting 40% of the pastoral staff apart for the work and sending them off, what does this tell us about God's preference for "mission" over "maintenance?"
  
2. According to verses 4 and 5, where did Barnabas and Paul go? [Note: Try to locate these places on a map in the back of a Bible or in a Bible atlas.] What did they do when they got there? Why do you think they started in the synagogues?
  
3. Imagine that you are doing evangelism in another state, and a senator of that state (such as Sergius Paulus in verse 7) invites you to share the gospel with him. How would you feel? What if while you are there one of his top aides opposes you? What would you do?
  
4. What is interesting about Paul's first miracle in Acts 13:11? Do you think that what happened to Elymas was fitting? In view of Paul's own experience (Acts 9:8-9), how might we see this blinding as a "severe mercy" by Paul?

5. How did the Proconsul react when he saw what happened to Elymas? What is striking about the first three Gentile converts in the Book of Acts (Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 8:25-39; centurion Cornelius, Acts 10; and Sergius Paulus)? Does this surprise you? Why or why not?
  
6. When Paul talked to people about Jesus, what source did he use to convince people (Acts 13:5, 7, 12, 15, 44, 46, and 49) that Jesus was the Messiah? What does this tell us about witnessing, and our own preparation and approach for evangelism?
  
7. In verse 8, Elymas tried to “turn away” the proconsul from the faith. Paul explains this in verse 10 as Elymas “making crooked” the straight paths of the Lord. How is the Lord's path a “straightaway?” Who are today's Elymases who try to make it crooked, and lead the innocent astray? How can you pray for them and speak truth to them?

**Memory Verse:**

**“Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord.”  
(Acts 13:12, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 7:**  
**“Clean Before My Lord I Stand”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 13:13-41**

1. This week we continue following Paul on his First Missionary Journey (c. A.D. 46-48). Again, using a Bible Atlas or other map, trace Paul and Barnabas’ travels around Asia Minor. Do you notice anything peculiar about their path?
  
2. Antioch of Pisidia was a large and thriving Roman city with a diverse population. Imagine that you were Paul and given an opportunity to openly share the gospel in a completely foreign environment. How would you respond and what would you say?
  
3. *Acts 13:16-41* records Paul’s lengthy discourse on the history of God’s activity in the world (specifically regarding salvation). What key historical figures and events does Paul reference? Why might this approach to the gospel have been significant in a Jewish synagogue?
  
4. Paul is very clear to mention that Jesus was raised from the dead (*Acts 13:30-33*). What is the importance of this historical event of the resurrection? Why do so many people throughout history oppose the historical reliability of this event?

5. Why do you think Paul quotes from both the Psalms (verses 33 and 35) and the Prophets (verses 34 and 41) of the Old Testament? What are these Old Testament passages and what is their connection to Jesus Christ? What does this say about Christ's relationship to the writings of the Old Testament?
  
6. Paul uses the phrase "forgiveness of sins" in *Acts 13:38*. What exactly does this phrase mean? How does this forgiveness happen in a person's life? Are you confident that your sins have been completely "cleaned" (or forgiven) by God? Why or why not?
  
7. Some translations of *Acts 13:39* use the word "freed" (NASB), but the term could be translated "justified" (NIV). What does "justified" mean and how does it happen in one's life (cf. *Romans 4:4-5*)? How does this very important term relate to the Law of Moses as well as to faith in Jesus Christ?

**Memory Verses:**

**"Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. (39) Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses."  
(Acts 13:38-39, NIV)**



5. Notice Paul and Barnabas' response to the priest of Zeus' attempts to offer sacrifices to them (*Acts 14:13-15*). How quickly did they respond and what did they say? What does this example show us about our need to be prepared at all times to communicate the gospel (*1 Peter 3:14-15*)? Are you prepared? Why or why not?
  
6. To whom do Paul and Barnabas immediately turn the attention of the crowds? How might this be similar to Jesus' humble response to the peoples' praise in *Matthew 21*? What do these accounts tell us about what genuine humility really looks like?
  
7. What do verses 16 and 17 reveal about God's character and His response to non-believers throughout history? Is this consistent with what you understand God's character to be? Why or why not? How should we respond?

**Memory Verse:**

**“Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them.”**

**(Acts 14:15, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 9:**  
**“God, Grit and Good Theology: How to Survive When**  
**You’re the Nail”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 14:19-23**

1. Imagine you were Paul in Lystra, having just been stoned almost to death (*Acts 14:19*) Now see what Paul does in *Acts 14:20*. Does this strike you as remarkable? Would you have done the same? Why or why not?
  
2. Notice whom Paul credits for saving his life from the stoning in *Acts 14:19-20* (see *2 Timothy 3:11*). Have you or anyone you know been through a “near death” experience? Do you believe that God was sovereign over that experience, saving you from death? Have you thanked Him?
  
3. Is it ever a good idea to flee a situation when you will experience persecution (see *Acts 14:4-7*)? How do you know when to stay and when to leave? Have you ever stayed in or fled a situation when you knew that you would experience persecution?
  
4. What can we learn from Paul’s example in *Acts 14:21* where he returns to Lystra after having almost been killed there? Why do you think he returned to Lystra?

5. What activities do Paul and Barnabas perform in *Acts 14:21-23*? How do these activities model healthy ministry for us today? What ways can you participate and serve in ministry that you are not already doing? What steps do you need to take?
  
6. Paul seems to indicate that suffering is critical to participation in the Kingdom of God (*Acts 14:22*, cf. *2 Timothy 3:12*). If this is true, why do we so often orchestrate the events of our lives to avoid suffering? Does the Bible mention different kinds of "suffering?" If so, what "kind" is Paul referring to here?
  
7. Describe a situation from your life where you encountered painful circumstances or loss, but where you knew that God was working out the situation for your good and His glory (*Romans 8:28*). How did this understanding impact your view of God and His sovereignty?

**Memory Verse:**

**"... strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.'"**  
**(Acts 14:22, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 10:**  
**"Turtle on a Fencepost"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 15:1-11**

1. What does it mean to say that Satan attacks externally as well as internally? Do you agree that this is Satan's pattern of attacking followers of Christ? Have you ever survived an external attack only to be met with an internal one?
  
2. Why did certain men believe that it was necessary to be circumcised in order to be saved (Acts 15:1, 5)? What were they claiming was the basis for salvation, grace or works? Why was their claim a dangerous one?
  
3. Do you tend to view salvation and living the Christian life from a "performance" perspective? If so, can you have any assurance that you have reached the standard that God demands of us? How do God's grace and faith in Jesus Christ grant us this assurance?
  
4. Why was this Jerusalem Council so important in the history of the church? Why do we not have similar councils in the church today? How did Paul and Barnabas' missionary experience qualify them to attend this Council?

5. In *Acts 15:7ff*, Peter enters the debate and begins to mention how God promised that Gentiles would hear the gospel and believe. Why might this have caused the Jewish Christians who were present to be uncomfortable?
  
6. How were some of the Jewish Christians testing God and placing a “yoke” upon the Gentile Christians? To what does this phrase refer? Have you ever done the same and placed this “yoke” upon yourself or others?
  
7. What does Peter claim is the basis for salvation in *Acts 15:11*? Reading similar verses such as *Ephesians 2:8-9* and *Titus 3:5*, why do you think that many people (Christians and non-Christians alike) struggle to embrace that salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone? Do you struggle to embrace this truth?

**Memory Verse:**

***“But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”***  
**(Acts 15:11, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 11:**  
**“R U a Monkey or a Kitten”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 15:1-29; Romans 6:15-16**

1. Do you think that the men from Judea (Acts 15:1) were Christians? What clues might Acts 15:5 give about them? If they were, Christians, then how could they say that circumcision was necessary in order to be saved?
  
2. In what ways do you approach the Christian life like a Pharisee? In other words, how do you try to pursue your sanctification (i.e. growth as a Christian) through your own efforts? Also, how might you judge others because of your struggles with *legalism*?
  
3. On the opposite extreme from *legalism* is *license* (living how you want to regardless of what God’s word says). How is *license* equally as sinful as *legalism*? Why do so many Christians choose to live apart from God after salvation and rebel against Him?
  
4. How do you spurn God’s instruction and live apart from Him? Are you aware of how you offend God through your sinful behavior? What does *Romans 6:15-16* tell us about the importance of obedience over that of sin? How should you respond to this?

5. What role does *grace* play in our sanctification? What role do our own efforts play? Can these two be reconciled? If so, how? Read *1 Corinthians 15:10*. What is this verse saying? Does this verse add clarity or further confusion to the discussion?
  
6. Why do you think that this first Church Council chose the three things from which the Gentiles were to abstain (*Acts 15:20, 29*)? What was the significance of these three things in the Jewish faith and why might they hinder our spiritual growth as Gentiles?
  
7. *Acts 15:16-18* indicates that God has always planned to extend salvation to the Gentiles (see also *Deuteronomy 28:10* and *Amos 9:12*). How does this impact your view of God and His *grace*? Confess to God areas where you need to embrace this *grace* rather than “hold onto” *legalism* or “let go” through *license*.

**Memory Verse:**

**“You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.”**

**(Acts 15:29, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 12:**  
**“Paul and the Law, #1: The Natural Law”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**

**Acts 14:17; Romans 2:14-15; 3:10-11; 2 Corinthians 4:6**

1. How much of the Old Testament law (of Moses) do you think we’re required to obey? Do we need to obey just the Ten Commandments? All ten of them or just some? Any other commands that we’re required to obey?
  
2. What does it mean to have the Natural Law of God “written on our hearts” (see *Romans 2:14-15*)? What are some evidences from human experience that show us this Natural Law at work?
  
3. What does the reality of Natural Law say about the existence of God (cf. *Romans 1:20*)? Why do so many people deny God’s existence and their need for His grace (see *Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 1:21, 32; 3:10-11*)? What role might Satan play (see *2 Corinthians 4:4*)?
  
4. We essentially demonstrate our own disbelief in God when we fail to act out in faith by trusting and obeying Him and His word. Consequently, how do you demonstrate disbelief in God’s existence through your disobedience and failure to trust Him?

5. What is the New Covenant (see *Jeremiah 31:31-34* and *Ezekiel 36:26-27*)? If this is a concept found in the Old Testament, how does it apply to us as Christians living in the New Testament time of the church (see *Hebrews 8:6-13*; notice that Jesus is the “mediator” of this New Covenant)?
  
6. How does this concept of the New Covenant and a “renewed” (or “changed”) heart impact you? How aware were you of your need for this “renewal” before you placed your faith in Jesus Christ? If God gives us renewed hearts, then why do we still struggle so mightily with sin as Christians?
  
7. Hopefully you’re encouraged by the glorious salvation that you have through your faith in Christ (*2 Corinthians 4:6*)! How can you encourage other Christians to celebrate their salvation this week? In light of the issue of Natural Law, how can you share this message of salvation with those who need to hear it this week?

**Memory Verses:**

**“Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, (15) since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.”**

**(Romans 2:14-15, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 13:**  
**"Paul and the Law, #2: The Mosaic Law"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Matthew 5:17; Romans 7:6; 3:1-2; 7:12; 10:4;**  
**Galatians 3:10, 23-25; 4:5**

1. How have we been released from the Law of Moses (*Romans 7:6*)? What does it mean to "die to" (or be "released from") the Law? What does it mean to serve in the "new way" of the Spirit as opposed to the "old way" of the "written code" (or "letter")?
  
2. Read *Psalms 147:19-20* and *Romans 3:1-2*. Why did God give His word or law solely to the nation of Israel? Was withholding His word from the Gentile nations cruel of God to do? If the Mosaic Law was "holy, righteous, and good" (*Romans 7:12*), why did God replace it and release us from it?
  
3. Why do you think God chose to establish the Mosaic Law in the first place (*Exodus 19-24*)? What benefit would such a burdensome list of regulations have for the nation of Israel? How does Paul relate his struggles with sin to the Law in *Romans 7:7-25*?
  
4. How is the Mosaic Law a curse (*Galatians 3:10*)? Is it a curse solely for those who were part of Israel or is it still a curse for us today? In light of what Christ accomplished for us (*Galatians 3:13*), have you truly experienced freedom from the curse of the Law (see *2 Corinthians 3:9*)?

5. What did Jesus mean when He said that He came to “fulfill” the Law and Prophets and not “abolish” them (*Matthew 5:17*)? How does Christ’s fulfillment apply to us when we place our faith in Him? Are we “descendants/offspring” of Abraham (*Romans 4:16*)? If so, what qualifies us as “descendants?”
  
6. What difference does the reality of Christ’s fulfillment of the Law (and Prophets) make in your life on a daily basis (see *Romans 10:4*; *Galatians 3:23-25*)? When you read in *Galatians 4:5* that you have been “redeemed” and adopted as a “son” (or “daughter”) of God, how are you impacted?
  
7. Take some time this week and read through *Psalm 119*. Even though this Psalm is talking about the Old Testament Law of God, how are you impacted when you realize that you have abundant access to God’s word and decrees through the Bible?

**Memory Verse:**

**“But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.”  
(Romans 7:6, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 14:**  
**“Paul and the Law, #3: The Law of Christ”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**

**Matthew 5:17-20; 44; 11:29-30; 22:37-40; 28:20; John 13:34-35;**  
**1 Corinthians 9:21; 10:23; 15:10; Galatians 5:1, 14; 2:20; 6:2**

1. Read *Matthew 5:44* and *28:20*. How difficult is it for you to “love your enemies?” What might this “love” look like? What steps can you take? How is this command connected to the entirety of Christ’s teachings to His disciples (and to us)?
  
2. What does Paul mean when he writes that it “is for freedom that Christ has set us free (*Galatians 5:1*)? How, if at all, is this freedom connected to our salvation? Where in your life do you struggle to embrace this freedom and how does this struggle affect your relationships with others?
  
3. Read *1 Corinthians 9:21*. How did Paul use his freedom from the law to more effectively reach others for Jesus Christ? Have you ever had a similar evangelistic opportunity?
  
4. What danger might have led Paul to use the quotation that he did in *1 Corinthians 10:23*? Do you struggle in any way with abusing the freedom that has been granted to you through your faith in Christ? What changes might you need to make in your life?

5. Read *Matthew 5:17-20*. What is Jesus saying in Verse 20? Does your righteousness surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees? Why or why not? How does God's grace impact your "righteousness" (see *1 Corinthians 15:10*)?
  
6. What does it mean to be "crucified with Christ" (*Galatians 2:20*)? Why did Paul use this language? How does this "crucifixion" impact someone's ability to live out the "law of Christ?" Have you been similarly "crucified?" Why or why not?
  
7. How does Christ's "yoke" (*Matthew 11:29-30*) allow us to live out this law of love (*Matthew 22:37-40; Galatians 5:14*)? Why is love the marquis characteristic that identifies Christ's disciples (*John 13:34-35*)? How does this emphasis on love impact how you will spend your time this week?

**Memory Verses:**

**"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (35) By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."  
(John 13:34-35, NIV)**

**"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."  
(Galatians 6:2, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 15:**  
**“When to Fight, When to Yield”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 15:12-35, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; 10:23**

1. Considering James’ status (as the half-brother of Jesus [see *Matthew 13:55* and *Galatians 1:19*] and leader of the Jerusalem church [see *Acts 12:17* and *Galatians 2:9*]), why might his opinion have had significant impact on this issue?
  
2. Do you really believe that “all things are lawful/permissible” (*1 Corinthians 10:23a*)? What does this phrase say about God’s grace? Where might this principle become dangerous?
  
3. Now read the corollary phrase “but not all things are profitable/beneficial” (*1 Corinthians 10:23b*). What does this phrase say about God? How might this principle become abused?
  
4. Where do you put your stress, on grace or rules? How, if at all, has your background/upbringing contributed to this emphasis? How have you seen God bring about growth in your life in this area?

5. If we're exhorted to fight over *principles* and not *practices*, how can you distinguish between the two? What defines a "principle" and what defines a "practice?" How do the examples of Acts 13:8-10 and Galatians 2:4-5 help give us clarity on this issue?
  
6. What are the four "rules" that James gives for the Gentile Christians to follow (Acts 15:20 and 29)? Why does he choose these four and how are they more clearly tied to "principles" rather than "practices?"
  
7. If you are a person who stresses grace (i.e. liberty), where do you need to limit your liberty in order to love others more fully? If you stress rules (i.e. legalism), where do you need to grow in grace in order to love others (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)?

**Memory Verses:**

**"For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more."**

**(1 Corinthians 9:19, NASB)**

**"Everything is permissible" – but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible" – but not everything is constructive."**

**(1 Corinthians 10:23, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 16:**  
**“There’s Only You and Me and We Just Disagree”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 15:36-41**

1. What was Paul hoping to accomplish in *Acts 15:36*? What purpose would these visits serve to the churches? How might this be a model for missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and how can we participate in similar endeavors?
  
2. Who was John Mark (see *Acts 12:12*; *Galatians 4:10* and *1 Peter 5:13*)? Why was he chosen to join Paul and Barnabas on their Missionary Journeys (*Acts 12:25*; *13:5*)? (Note: this is most likely the same “Mark” who wrote The Gospel of Mark).
  
3. Why did Paul want to leave John Mark behind (*Acts 15:38*)? What might have caused John Mark to desert them in *Acts 13:13*? (Note: Many theories exist as to why John Mark left to return to Jerusalem in *Acts 13*)
  
4. Paul saw spiritual leadership as a challenging task, which was not for the weak. Barnabas was more concerning about nurturing the wounded John Mark. Whose “side” would you take? Was Paul right? Was Barnabas right? Is it possible that both of them were right?

5. Have you ever experienced sharp disagreements with other followers of Christ? Briefly describe what happened. Looking back on those situations, can you see how both of you may have been “right?” How easy is it for you to see things from another’s perspective (see *Romans 12:10* and *Philippians 2:3-4*)?
  
6. Do you think that God may want to bring good out of evil when a “split” occurs? How did He ultimately bring good out of Paul and Barnabas’ disagreement? How might He do the same when we experience similar “splits?”
  
7. Read *2 Timothy 4:11*. What does this verse show us about Paul’s opinion of Timothy later in life? How does this serve as a model for us in the arena of reconciliation and forgiveness? Is there a “John Mark” in your life to whom you need to give a second chance or with whom you need to seek reconciliation (see *Ephesians 4:32*)?

**Memory Verses:**

**“They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, (40) but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.”  
(Acts 15:39-40, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 17:**  
**“What Does a MOG/WOG Look Like?”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 16:1-5; 1 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 2:19-22;**  
**Selected passages from 1 and 2 Timothy**

1. What kind of spiritual heritage (if any) do you have? Do you recall specific examples of parents or grandparents passing their faith down to you (*2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15*)? If you are a parent or grandparent, what are you doing to provide a great Christian heritage for your children?
  
2. Can you identify with any of Timothy’s weaknesses (sickness, *1 Timothy 5:23*; timidity, *2 Timothy 2:1*; emotions, *2 Timothy 1:4*)? If not, what is a weakness of yours? How can these weaknesses actually turn into strengths (*Galatians 4:13-14; Psalm 119:71*)?
  
3. What do you think Timothy's gifts were (*1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6*)? What might be your gifts? How are you using them? Do you consider yourself to be a teachable person or a defensive one (*2 Timothy 2:2*)?
  
4. Are these sermons and Study Questions helping you to become more “Bible-wise” (*1 Timothy 3:14-15*)? What other ways are you getting to know the Scriptures (see also *Matthew 4:1-4* and *2 Timothy 3:16*)?

5. The word for “sincere” in *2 Timothy 1:5* literally means “unhypocritical.” Do you ever find it hard to be authentic around other Christians? How can you grow in this area? Who can encourage you in this growth?
  
6. Is being cheerful and positive usually associated with godliness (*Philippians 2:14-19*)? Who is a positive person that you know? Do you think selfless concern for others is as rare today as it was in Timothy’s day (*Philippians 2:20-22*)? How is Christ working in your life to make you less obsessed with yourself and more focused on others?
  
7. Are you a faithful person (*1 Corinthians 4:17* and *1 Thessalonians 3:2*)? In which areas of your life are you faithful? In which areas do you struggle to be faithful? What is God calling you to be faithful in this week? Share this with others so they can pray for you.

**Memory Verse:**

**“For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.”**

**(1 Corinthians 4:17, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 18:**  
**"Finding God's Will"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 16:1-10 and selected passages**

1. Now that we've embarked upon Paul's Second Missionary Journey, take note of the places that he goes. Why would the Holy Spirit prevent Paul from ministering in Asia (Acts 16:6)? Doesn't God want His truth to be proclaimed to every nation (Acts 1:8)?
  
2. What is the most frustrating thing for you about finding "God's will?" Did Paul experience these frustrations in this passage at all? Since we don't know God's will ahead of time, how should we respond to this uncertainty?
  
3. Has God ever prevented you from moving forward with a decision in life? Did you struggle at the time to believe that God was in control of your circumstances? Do you have God's desires on your heart or your own (Proverbs 2:1-5; Psalm 37:4; Matthew 6:33; Romans 12:1-2)?
  
4. Do you regularly seek counsel from God's word, counselors, and common sense? Who are the people in your life who help you with this discernment? Share about a time recently when those people helped you in this area?

5. Where is God calling you to take initiative and action for Him and His Kingdom? What prevents you from doing so? (Fear? Pride? Laziness?) Is the "Spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16:7) different from the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6)? See Romans 8:9-11 as well.
  
6. Paul received a vision, apparently from God, that informed him where he should go (Acts 16:9)? Does God still speak through visions to us today? How easily do you *adjust* to God's activity around you?
  
7. Notice the "we" and "us" in Acts 16:10. What does this indicate? How easy (or difficult) is it for you to *relax* and leave the results to God? Why? What are the benefits to trusting God with our circumstances (Philippians 1:12-14)?

**Memory Verse:**

**"After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them."**

**(Acts 16:10, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 19:**  
**"Whaddya Mean She's Not a Christian?"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 16:11-15 and selected passages**

1. When visiting a new city, where did Paul usually go first (*Acts 16:13*)? What does this tell us about the number of Jews in this "Roman colony?" How did Paul and his team model evangelism for us in this passage (*1 Corinthians 9:19-23*)?
  
2. What do we learn about Lydia, a Gentile, who met with a few Jews down by the river instead of with the masses of her countrymen at the pagan temples in town? Given that purple was the color associated with wealth, what sort of lifestyle did Lydia live?
  
3. Do you know of any modern-day "Lydia's" – people who worship "God," but yet still don't know the gospel? Why isn't belief in or even the worship of "God" enough to forgive one's sins (*Romans 1:18-20*)?
  
4. What happened to Lydia in *Acts 16:14* when she heard the gospel that Paul was proclaiming? Who opened her heart to this truth (see *Ephesians 2:1-5, 8-9*)? How important are our prayers to our Father on behalf of those who don't know Christ?

5. How did Lydia respond to her newfound conversion (*Acts 16:15*)? Paul traditionally refused to take money or lodging from the people he was just meeting on the mission field (*2 Corinthians 11:9; 12:14*). Why then did he receive her hospitality?
  
6. Is Christianity too “exclusive” (*John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 5:2*)? Have you ever met any “universalists” who claim there are many ways to heaven? What is your response to them? What is the difference between “universalism” and “inclusivism?”
  
7. Even though God is the one who “opens hearts” to the gospel, we still have a responsibility to share the message of salvation. How can you more intentionally share the specific truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ with the “Lydia’s” in your life?

**Memory Verse:**

**“One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.”**

**(Acts 16:14, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 20:**  
**“When the Jailhouse Rocked”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 16:16-34**

1. Is it strange that a spirit-possessed slave girl was testifying to Paul and Silas' role as servants of God (*Acts 16:16-17*)? Why was she doing this? Why might an evil spirit or demon recognize those who serve God (*Mark 1:23-24; 5:7; cf. James 2:19*)?
  
2. If this slave girl was testifying to the truth, was it wrong for Paul to exercise the spirit from her simply because he was annoyed (*Acts 16:18*)? What was the result of this (*Acts 16:19*)?
  
3. This would not be the first or last time that Paul experienced severe physical harm on the mission field (*Acts 14:19; 2 Corinthians 11:-23-26*)? Have you ever suffered persecution unjustly resulting from your service to Jesus Christ and the lies of others?
  
4. How did Paul and Silas respond to their imprisonment in *Acts 16:25*? How was this remarkable and how did this impact those around them? How has your attitude in the midst of challenges served as a witness to others (*Matthew 5:16; James 1:2-3*)?

5. The earthquake in Acts 16:26 was clearly a miracle sent by God to deliver Paul and Silas from prison. Why did the Philippian jailer almost kill himself in verse 27? Why do you think he was so eager to find out about salvation in verse 30?
  
6. Have you ever experienced God's miraculous protection? Were you spared from death or from a dangerous situation? What are other examples from Scripture where God miraculously protected His people (see Exodus 14:21-22, 27; Daniel 6:20-22)?
  
7. Why did they promise that his "household" would be saved (Acts 16:31)? What does this say about the importance of spiritual leadership within the home? What was their first act of obedience, taken in Acts 16:33? Have you taken this step as well (Acts 8:36-38; 22:16)? If not, when is the next opportunity for you to take it?

**Memory Verses:**

**"He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"  
(31) They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you  
and your household."  
(Acts 16:30-31, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episodes 21 and 22:**  
**"In the Dark, Parts 1 and 2"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 16:16-40 and selected passages**

1. In Acts 16:19-24, we see Paul and Silas encountering an unexpected crisis. What does their response to this crisis reveal about their character (Acts 16:25)? What does your response to crisis demonstrate about your character?
  
2. How did Paul's attitudes affect his actions while in the Philippian prison (Acts 16:25)? Read *Philippians 1:21* and *4:11-13*. How do these statements by Paul demonstrate the attitude that God desires for us to have (see also *James 1:2-4*)?
  
3. Would you agree that "life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to it (see *Philippians 4:6-7*)?" Explain your answer. Describe a time when you experienced suffering. Did your reaction determine your suffering experience?
  
4. How did God use Paul's physical suffering to bring about salvation for the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:28-30, 34)? Has God ever used suffering in your life to accomplish His salvation purposes?

5. While Paul experiences freedom of one kind, the Philippian jailer experiences freedom of another. From what was the jailer freed (*Acts 16:32-33*)? What did he gain as part of his freedom (*Acts 10:43; John 3:15-16; Ephesians 1:7*)?
  
6. God made sure that Paul's negative (or "darkness") experiences were not wasted as He carried forth His work of salvation. What are some other examples of God working in "darkness" throughout history (*Genesis 1:1-2; 50:20; 2 Corinthians 8:9*)?
  
7. Spend some time praying for those you know who may be suffering. How might God specifically be using their experience to bring about good in others' lives? How can you encourage them this week in the midst of their suffering (*Romans 12:15*)?

**Memory Verse:**

**"But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them."  
(Acts 16:25, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 23:**  
***"Unleash the Hound: A Fresh View of Witnessing"***  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 17:1-15**

1. Paul's "custom" was to go and talk to the Jews wherever he was. How was his custom based on God's priority for mission (*Romans 1:16*)? What might we learn from Paul's persistent example in *Acts 17:2* (see also *1 Corinthians 15:58*)?
  
2. What was the source for Paul's reasoning with these Jews in Thessalonica (*Acts 17:2*)? Who is the focus of Paul's reasoning with these Jews (*Acts 17:3*)? If you were asked to "reason" with folks today, would you know what to say (*1 Peter 3:15*)?
  
3. Read *Romans 4:25*. Why did Jesus *have to* suffer (or die) and rise again from the dead (*Acts 17:3*)? What was accomplished for us by Christ? Why do more people not embrace this gospel truth?
  
4. Why did Paul's declaration that Jesus was the "Christ" ("Messiah") make some of the Jews jealous (*Acts 17:5*)? Have you ever engaged others with a rational, biblical argument only to be met with irrational, emotional responses? Why does this happen?

5. Jesus also encountered opposition when He claimed to be the Christ (*Luke 23:2*). What were the Jews expecting the Christ to be like? Why do you think that it is important to proclaim that Jesus is both Christ/Messiah (*Acts 17:3*) and king (*Acts 17:7*)?
  
6. How did the Jews in Berea differ from those in Thessalonica (*Acts 17:11*)? What did they do once Paul shared the same gospel truth from the Scriptures? What does this demonstrate about the Bible (*2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 4:12*)?
  
7. Are you sometimes hesitant to “unleash” the Bible to others? What happens when honest people dig into the Bible on their own? If they are sincerely seeking, do you believe that they will discover that Jesus is both Savior and Lord (*2 Peter 3:18*)?

**Memory Verse:**

**“Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”**  
(*Acts 17:11, NIV*)



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 24:**  
**“If Jesus is The Truth, Why Don't More College**  
**Professors Become Christians?”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 17:16-34; Romans 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 1:21-2:8**

1. Why was Paul's spirit so provoked/distressed by the idols of Athens (Acts 17:16)? How does his evangelism (in both the private synagogue and the public marketplace) serve as a model for us (Acts 17:17; 1 Corinthians 9:23)?
  
2. What was this “new teaching” that Paul was presenting to them (Acts 17:19) and why did it sound strange to them (Acts 17:20)? How does Luke describe their approach to philosophy in Acts 17:21? Do you know anyone who takes a similar approach?
  
3. Why can human wisdom never lead us to discover ultimate truth (Isaiah 40:13-14)? How did the Athenians' human wisdom lead them to become proud (Acts 17:18, 32)? What is the irony of their pride according to Paul (Acts 17:23c and 30a)?
  
4. Even as Christians, how are we in danger of being consumed by the pursuit of human wisdom? Why does pride so naturally result from this pursuit? What should be the focus of our pursuit instead of human wisdom (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10)?

5. How does the pursuit of human wisdom lead to idolatry (*Acts 17:29; Romans 1:22-23*)? Why do we have the tendency to replace the truth of God with a false imitation of that truth? How does our desire for control relate to this struggle?
  
6. Institutions such as Yale, Harvard, Princeton, etc. are considered to be centers for human wisdom. Why is the “soil” in these places not fertile for God’s revealed truth? Have you ever conversed with people from places similar to these about God?
  
7. How is the message of Jesus Christ foolishness to the world and human wisdom (*1 Corinthians 1:18-21, 25; 2:4-8*)? Are you humbled when you think about the wisdom of God? How should you respond to Him and His truth today (*Proverbs 3:5-6*)?

**Memory Verse:**

**“All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.”**  
(*Acts 17:21, NIV*)



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 25:**  
**“What Would God Say If He Spoke at Harvard?”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 17:16-34**

1. When Paul said that the men of Athens were “very religious in every way” (Acts 17:22), what did he mean? What defined their “religion” (Acts 17:16) and what was God’s opinion of their “religion” (Exodus 20:3-6; 1 Peter 4:3)?
  
2. Why do you think that Paul began his mini-sermon by referring to God as the “Unknown God” (Acts 17:23)? How was the Athenians’ worship of the one true God incomplete and, consequently, erroneous (John 4:22-24)?
  
3. How much of the world did God create (Acts 17:24; Isaiah 42:5)? Why would Paul share this with these philosophers? Why does he point out that God does not dwell in temples made with human hands (1 Kings 8:27)?
  
4. Have you ever reflected on the fact that God gives *everything* “life and breath” (Acts 17:25; Genesis 2:7)? At the same time, God is “not far” from us (Acts 17:27). How do we reconcile God’s ultimate power and His intimate closeness with us?

5. Do you sometimes think that God's divine nature is like a manmade object (*Acts 17:29*)? How might your own view of God be incomplete and erroneous? How might this equate to idolatry? Explain your answer.
  
6. How does God desire for people to respond to His revealed truth (*Acts 17:30; Titus 2:11-13; 1 John 1:9*)? As Christians, what happens to us when we fail to respond to God's truth (*Hebrews 12:13*)?
  
7. Hopefully this passage has expanded your idea of the greatness of God. What specific steps can you take this week to recognize God's greatness in your life? Again, why is it difficult for the "upper crust" of society, academics, etc. to accept the truth of Christ?

**Memory Verse:**

**"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands."  
(Acts 17:24, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 26:**  
**"God is in Control"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 18:1-21**

1. Why might Claudius (Emperor of the Roman Empire at the time) have forced all Jews to leave Rome (*Acts 18:2*)? Do you think it was easy for Aquila and Priscilla to trust that God was in control of their circumstances?
2. Who were Aquila and Priscilla (Prisca; *1 Corinthians 16:19*) How did God use them to minister in Ephesus (*Acts 18:24-26*)? Do you believe that God sovereignly caused Aquila and Priscilla to move in order that He might use them more effectively?
3. Even though Paul experienced rejection in his evangelism (*Acts 18:6*), who was ultimately in control of the results of his efforts (*Acts 18:10*)? What was the result of the Jews' rejection of Paul's message in *Acts 18:6* (see also *Acts 13:46*)?
4. How would God's words to Paul in *Acts 18:9-10* have been an encouragement to you? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is present with you as you serve Him and further the Kingdom of God (*Matthew 28:20*)? Why or why not?

5. Do you believe that God was in control of Paul's difficult circumstances in *Acts 18:12-17*? Is it difficult for you to trust that God is in control of the trials and difficulties that you experience in your life? Why or why not (*Romans 8:28*)?
  
6. Why do you think Paul refused to stay in Ephesus when the Christians there requested that he stay (*Acts 18:20*)? How does his response of "if God wills" in *Acts 18:21* demonstrate Paul's trust in the sovereignty of God (*James 4:13-16*)?
  
7. How does Paul's "if God wills" perspective also demonstrate humility? What area of your life (finances, relationships, health, etc.) do you struggle to embrace an "if God wills" perspective? What can you do to grow in your trust in God's sovereignty?

**Memory Verses:**

**"One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: 'Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. (10) For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.'"**  
**(Acts 18:9-10, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 27:**  
**"It Takes 3 to Save 1"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 18:1-17 and selected passages**

1. Share about any attempts that you have made to share the gospel message of Jesus Christ with others. Was your evangelism "successful" or not? Explain your answer.
  
2. What is our responsibility when it comes to evangelism (*Matthew 28:19; Acts 18:4; 20:27; Ezekiel 3:17-19*)? Why is evangelism so important to our Heavenly Father? Why is it so challenging for us to share this message with others?
  
3. Crispus was a leader in the synagogue (*Acts 18:8*) and an unlikely convert to Christianity. Who are some "unlikely" converts that you have known (either personally or throughout history)?
  
4. Do you believe that God is ultimately sovereign over the salvation on people (*Acts 18:9-10*)? How do passages such as *Acts 18:27* ("believed by grace") and *1 Corinthians 1:6-7* emphasize this idea?

5. If God is ultimately sovereign over salvation, why are more people not saved (*1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9*)? If God is sovereign over salvation, why should we evangelize at all (see *2 Timothy 4:2, 5*)?
  
6. If God spoke to you the same words that He did to Paul in *Acts 18:9-10*, how would you live your life differently? How does the presence of Christ give you comfort and boldness to share about Him with others (*Matthew 28:19-20*)?
  
7. Who is a friend or family member whom you desperately desire to believe in Jesus Christ? Take time as a Community Group to pray for these individuals. Read *Romans 1:16* and pray for opportunities to share the gospel with these people.

**Memory Verse:**

**“One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent.’”**

**(Acts 18:9, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 28:**  
**"A Man for All Seasons"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 18:1-21 and selected passages**

1. When you first meet someone, what impresses you most about them (intelligence, relationships, sense of humor, etc.)? What do think the qualities are that God finds most "impressive?"
  
2. What does *Acts 18:2-5* tell you about the value Paul placed on "community" or others in his life (*Romans 16:3ff*)? Who is your "community" here at TBC? If you don't have anyone, what steps can you take to get connected with others (*Hebrews 10:24-25*)?
  
3. What is Paul's response (*Acts 18:11*) to God's words in *Acts 18:9-10*? How is this response remarkable? What do we learn from Paul's example of trust in the living God (*Psalms 20:7*)?
  
4. If you struggle with worrying, how can you overcome that struggle (*Philippians 4:6-7*)? If anxiety or worry is such a struggle for so many of us, what is the solution (*Matthew 6:31-33; 1 Peter 5:7*)?

5. Why did Paul get his haircut in *Acts 18:18* (*Numbers 6:5*)? How does this demonstrate that Paul was a man of discipline (*1 Corinthians 9:24-27*)? What areas of your life are in need of deeper discipline or self control (*2 Timothy 1:7*)?
  
6. Paul demonstrated his spiritual maturity in *Acts 18:21* through his “if God wills” response to life (see also *Romans 15:32*). What area of your life do you need to adopt a similar response and let go of control (*James 4:15*)?
  
7. Share with someone this week about an area (community with others, trust instead of worry, discipline, or an “if God wills” response) where you need more “balance.” Ask that person (or those people) to pray specifically for your “balance” this week.

**Memory Verse:**

**“but taking leave of them and saying, ‘I will return to you again if God wills,’  
he set sail from Ephesus.”  
(Acts 18:21, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 29:**  
**"A Brick Short of a Full Load"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 18:24-19:7 and selected passages**

1. Apollos had a "thorough knowledge of the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24, NIV). How knowledgeable are you of the Scriptures? How can you grow in your understanding of the Bible (Psalm 119:97)?
  
2. Although Apollos knew the Scriptures, his understanding was incomplete (Acts 18:25). Was he saved? Where might your understanding of God's truth be incomplete?
  
3. What was the "baptism of John" (Acts 18:25; Mark 1:4)? Why was it so important that Priscilla and Aquila pulled Apollos aside (Acts 19:26; 1 Timothy 4:16)? How did Apollos' ministry change (Acts 19:28)?
  
4. Were the "disciples" of Acts 19:1 saved? If they "believed," why had they not received the Holy Spirit? What would have led Paul to ask them this question in Acts 19:2?

5. How was their baptism "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5 & 2:38) different than John's baptism (Acts 19:3)? In other words, how was Jesus' message different than that of John's (Acts 19:4)?
  
6. How was Paul able to invoke the Spirit's presence simply by laying his hands on these individuals (Acts 19:6 & 8:14-17)? Why is the presence of the Holy Spirit essential for our salvation and Christian life (Romans 8:9-11)?
  
7. How is the Spirit's presence in Acts 19:6 similar to other occurrences in the book of Acts (Acts 2:1-4; 10:45-46)? Does this verse reveal that every Christian will be able to speak in tongue/languages? Why or why not?

**Memory Verse:**

**"And he (Apollos) began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately."**

**(Acts 18:26, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 30:**  
**"Halloween's Scared"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 19:8-22 and selected passages**

1. What sort of investment did Paul put into his ministry in Asia (Acts 19:10; 20:31)? For a nomadic church planter, why do you think Paul spent so much time in Ephesus? What sort of return did he receive on his "investment?"
  
2. What is the craziest miracle you have ever heard of (or seen)? Aren't the "extraordinary" miracles in Acts 19:11-12 somewhat silly? Why would God choose to communicate His salvation through these strange miracles (2 Corinthians 5:19)?
  
3. Why would these Jewish exorcists use the name of Jesus Christ if they did not believe in Him (Acts 19:13)? Why is it dangerous to misuse the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 19:15-16; 1 Peter 5:8)?
  
4. What was the ultimate result of this incident (Acts 19:17)? How would "fear" cause people to hold the name of Jesus Christ in high esteem? Why do so many people not esteem Jesus Christ today (Luke 21:17; John 15:21)?

5. Reflect on the phrases "fear of/fears the Lord" or "fear of/fears God" (used over 40 times throughout the Old and New Testaments). Search through some of its uses. What do you find (*Proverbs 1:7*)? Is this the same "fear" mentioned in *Acts 19:17*?
  
6. How free must the people in *Acts 19:18* have felt? How has God's forgiveness granted your similar "freedom?" Do you really believe that God chooses to overlook your past and give you a glorious future (*2 Corinthians 5:17*)? Why or why not?
  
7. What caused Paul to leave for Jerusalem (*Acts 19:21*; Hint: if you have the NIV, check the NASB or KJV)? Why was Paul compelled to go to Rome (*Acts 23:11*; *Romans 15:24, 28*)? What did God have in store for him there (*Acts 28:30-31*)?

**Memory Verses:**

**"When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor."**

**(Acts 19:17, NIV)**

**"In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power."**

**(Acts 19:20, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 31:**  
**"Miracle Healings"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 19:11-12; John 14:12-14 and selected passages**

1. Have you ever experienced any miraculous healings in your life or know someone who has? Have you ever seen God answer prayers for healing? Describe your experience.
  
2. What was the purpose for which God performed miracles in the Bible (*Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:4*)? Why would it have been necessary for Jesus to confirm His message and authority through miracles (*Luke 5:24-26*)?
  
3. Jesus indicated that we would do greater works than He did if we believed in Him (*John 14:12*). What did He mean by this? Do you believe Him?
  
4. Jesus also claimed that He would do anything for His disciples if they asked "in His name" (*John 14:13-14*). What does it mean to ask for something "in Jesus' name?" What is the goal of asking for something "in Jesus' name" (*John 14:13b*)?

5. What did Jesus promise when we ask for something and believe that it will happen (*Matthew 21:20-22*; cf. *James 1:6*)? Why do so many of our prayers appear not to be answered – at least not answered the way we'd like them to be?
  
6. *James 5:14-16* is another well known "healing" passage in the New Testament. Why should the elders be present? What role would anointing oil play in this process?
  
7. What is the connection between healing and confession of sin (*James 5:15-16*)? Regardless of what our physical ailments might be, how can we experience healing in the ultimate (i.e. spiritual) sense according to *1 Peter 2:24*?

**Memory Verse:**

**"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father."**

**(John 14:12, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 32:**  
**"Riot in Ephesus!"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 19:23-41 and selected passages**

1. Can you think of any examples (modern or otherwise) when Christianity was viewed as a "threat" to another institution or industry? Why was Christianity viewed this way? What actions did people take in response to this "threat?"
  
2. Why was Paul's message threatening to Demetrius, the silversmith (Acts 19:26)? What was at stake from Demetrius' perspective (Acts 19:27)? How was Demetrius' perspective grossly inaccurate (Psalm 115:4-8; 1 Corinthians 8:4)?
  
3. Why did Paul's disciples not allow him to enter the theater in Ephesus (Acts 19:30-31)? What was Paul hoping to accomplish and why was he not afraid of this mob (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 9:16)?
  
4. Why are we scared to share the gospel? If Paul was willing to endure an angry mob, why do we often hesitate to speak up or stand up for the truth of Christ (2 Timothy 1:7-8)?

5. How did this crowd exhibit what's typically referred to as "mob mentality" (Acts 19:32, 34; see also Acts 21:34)? Have you ever been involved in a confusing situation like this? What happened and how was the situation, if at all, resolved?
  
6. Why would the town/city clerk attempt to quiet the crowd so quickly, pointing them towards the legal courts (Acts 19:39-40)? What danger might this riot have posed in the eyes of the Roman government?
  
7. What does this event from Paul's life demonstrate about the motives that some people have when they oppose the truth of Christianity (see Romans 1:18-19; Psalm 10:4; 14:1)? How does this encourage you to pray for those who do not know Jesus Christ?

**Memory Verse:**

**"You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all."  
(Acts 19:26, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 33:**  
**“You Fall Asleep, You Die!”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 20:1-12 and selected passages**

1. Why did Paul “exhort” the disciples in Macedonia and Greece (Acts 20:1-2; cf. 19:21; 1 Corinthians 16:5-7)? What may he have told them? If the Apostle Paul had spent three months with you and your church (Acts 20:3), what questions would you ask him?
  
2. Why would Paul return to Macedonia after the plot for his life (Acts 20:3; 2 Corinthians 1:15-16; 11:26; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16)? Notice the word “us” in Acts 20:5. What does this indicate (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1)? Why is this important?
  
3. Notice the crew that surrounded Paul and Luke on their travels (Acts 20:4-6). What does their diversity reveal about the expanse of Paul’s ministry (14:6, 17:1, 10)? Do you know of any parallels to Paul’s diverse ministry to Asia Minor in missions work today?
  
4. Why did Luke mention lamps in the upper room (Acts 20:8)? How would this have contributed to Eutychus’ drowsiness (Acts 20:9)? Did Eutychus (meaning “lucky”) actually die or did he appear to be dead?

5. Compare Paul's raising of Eutychus (Acts 20:10-12) with similar miracles of Peter (Acts 9:36-41) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:18-37)? How did this miracle authenticate Paul as an apostle? How does verse 10 demonstrate Paul's persistence (cf. Luke 15:4-7)?
  
6. Have you ever become spiritually "drowsy" similar to Eutychus' physical drowsiness? Who were the encouraging leaders who saw "life" in you, stepped in to embrace you back, and pointed you to back to Christ (Hebrews 3:12-14; 10:25)? Have you thanked them?
  
7. Considering this account of Eutychus and the fact that Paul re-visited so many places he had been previously (Acts 20:6; cf. 16:10), how can you specifically implement this kind of encouraging leadership this week (1 Thessalonians 2:7-12)?

**Memory Verse:**

**"But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said,  
'Do not be troubled, for his life is in him.'  
(Acts 20:10, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 34:**  
**“Psychology of the Christian Leader”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 20:13-31 and selected passages**

1. Using a Bible Atlas (or at least the maps found in your Bible), trace Paul and Luke’s travels in Acts 20:13-17. Why was Paul in a hurry to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost (Acts 20:16; Romans 15:25)?
  
2. Why would Paul send for the Ephesian elders from Miletus rather than going to Ephesus himself (Acts 20:16-17)? How did Paul model tenderness towards the Ephesians church (Acts 20:19; cf. 2 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:7-8)?
  
3. At the same time, how did Paul model toughness towards his enemies and the flock at Ephesus as well (Acts 20:20-21; cf. 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; 2 Corinthians 10:1-2; Romans 1:16; Galatians 1:9-10)? Why is this important for the leadership of any church to do?
  
4. Could you say what Paul said in Acts 20:22-23 (cf. 9:15-16)? How difficult would this be to know that suffering awaited you? How did Paul respond and how is his response an incredible model to us (Acts 20:24; 2 Timothy 4:6-8)?

5. Imagine if you were the Ephesian elders, knowing that you would never see Paul again (Acts 20:25)? How do Paul's words demonstrate his undying commitment to carrying out the work that God set before him to do (Acts 20:26-27; 1 Corinthians 9:23-27)?
  
6. Why might Paul need to warn these elders in Acts 20:28-31 (2 Peter 5:1-2; Matthew 7:15)? How do elders serve a similar function today (We'll learn more on this topic in a few weeks)? Do you see evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity in verse 28? Explain.
  
7. Notice Paul's repetition of his "tears" for the Ephesian elders and their church (Acts 20:19 and 31). Why is this sincerity so important for church leaders to express? How can a lack of this sincerity hinder a leaders' effectiveness for Christ (2 Corinthians 2:17)?

**Memory Verse:**

**"But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God."**

**(Acts 20:24, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 35:**  
**“Finishing Strong”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 20:22-24 and selected passages**

1. What a large accomplishment that you have finished in your lifetime (marathon, thesis, overcoming health issues, etc.)? Were you tempted to give up before completing? What makes completion so difficult?
  
2. Imagine that you were Paul, knowing that “finishing” meant your life would possibly end in Jerusalem (*Acts 20:22-23; 9:15-16; 2 Corinthians 6:4-5*)? How would you have responded?
  
3. How does Paul model endurance to the end in his task of proclaiming the gospel (*2 Corinthians 11:23*)? Do we need to endure similarly in our task to proclaim the gospel to our world (*Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8*)? Explain.
  
4. Similar to last week, consider *Acts 20:24* closely. Would you be willing to choose faithfulness over life itself? As you think about finishing well in this life, what would this kind of faithfulness look like (*Ephesians 5:15-17; Matthew 25:21*)?

5. Why do we so often struggle to maintain a life of faithfulness whereby we finish well? What is the key to pursuing a life of consistent and faithfulness (2 Corinthians 3:18; 12:9-10)? Are you depending on God's grace and His Spirit to do this (Romans 8:29-30)?
  
6. What is the danger of not living life so as to finish well? We obviously do not lose our salvation (Ephesians 1:13-14), but what might we lose out on? Who is an individual that you know who has finished or is finishing their lives well (Hebrews 12:1-2)?
  
7. In light of this sermon and Paul's words in Acts 20:22-24, what are some specific steps that you can take this week which will allow you to finish well as you further God's kingdom here on earth (Philippians 3:12-14)? Share these steps with someone.

**Memory Verse:**

**"But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God."**

**(Acts 20:24, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 36:**  
**“The Church that Cries ‘Wolf!’”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 20:28-31 and selected passages**

1. Why did Paul think it was so important to warn these men to be on their guard (Acts 20:28)? For what should they be on their guard? How does this passage emphasize the importance of elders within the church today (1 Peter 5:1-4)?
  
2. How does an elder serve as an “overseer” and “shepherd?” What is the difference, if any, between those two roles? Why is shepherding such a big deal to God (Ezekiel 34:1-5; Matthew 9:36; John 10:11)? What happens when a shepherd fails to do his job well?
  
3. How does Acts 20:28 illustrate the Trinity? Why is it important to understand that God the Father did not die on the cross? Why is the shed blood of Jesus Christ significant (Romans 3:25; 5:8-9; Ephesians 1:7; 2:13; Colossians 1:19-20; Revelation 5:9)?
  
4. Who were these “savage wolves” about whom Paul warned the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:29-30; Matthew 7:15)? What threat did these wolves pose (cf. John 10:12)? What eventually happened at the church in Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-2)?

5. Do we see “wolves” in our churches today (*1 Timothy 1:5-7*)? Have you ever encountered these “wolves” at any church? What happened? How do we see dangerous false teaching in our culture today (*2 Timothy 4:3-5*)? What can we do in response to this false teaching (*1 Timothy 4:6-7; Titus 1:9*)?
  
6. What are the seven essential doctrines of orthodox Christianity? Do you agree that all of these are essential? Why or why not? Do you think that this list should include additional doctrines? Which one(s)? Why might it not be considered “essential” for orthodoxy?
  
7. In light of Paul’s warning to be alert (*Acts 20:31*), how can we sharpen our theological “senses” in order to detect heresy (*Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:97*)? Do you need to talk to a staff member or elder about any of the essential doctrines? Do you know anyone who’s teaching contradicts any of the essential doctrines?

**Memory Verse:**

**“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”**

**(Acts 20:28, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 37:**  
**“When It Hurts to Say Goodbye”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 20:32-35 and selected passages**

1. Paul said that he committed/commended the elders of Ephesus to God and to the work of his grace (*Acts 20:32*; cf. *14:23*). What did he mean by this? How is the word of God’s grace able to build up? What “inheritance” is Paul talking about (*Ephesians 1:13-14*; *1 Peter 1:3-5*)?
  
2. Look at Paul’s example in *Acts 20:33* (cf. *2 Corinthians 11:8-9*; *12:14*)? Does this describe you? Do you take from others or frequently expect monetary help from others (parents, friends, etc.)? How does God want you to live differently?
  
3. How effective are you at supplying your own needs (*Acts 20:34*; cf. *Acts 18:1-3*)? How can a failure to do so be a burden to others (*2 Thessalonians 3:10-12*; *4:11-12*)? Have you ever known someone who burdened others in this way? What happened?
  
4. Who are the “weak” (*Acts 20:35*)? Do you currently help the weak (*Proverbs 14:31*; *Romans 12:3*; *15:26*)? Why or why not? Why can it be so challenging to help them (*1 John 3:16-17*)? How do you know if you are helping them and simply enabling them?

5. Where in the gospels does Jesus say "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (*Acts 20:35*; Maybe see *Luke 6:38*, but also note *John 20:30*)? Why is Paul referencing this quote here? What blessing awaits those who give (*Matthew 25:34-40*)?
  
6. What ways do you need to change so as to avoid being a burden to others (scheduling, spending, leisure activities, etc.)? In other words, *how can you start giving instead of receiving*? If you have you been an unnecessary burden to anyone recently, whose forgiveness might you need to seek (cf. *Matthew 18:23-24*)?
  
7. Considering that these were Paul's final words to these men in this life (cf. *Acts 20:36-38*), how can we follow his example? Have you ever said "goodbye" in a similar way to Paul in *Acts 20*? Is there anyone in your life that you need to commend to the Lord, even if you will see them again in this life?

**Memory Verse:**

**"And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."**

**(Acts 20:32, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 38:**  
**“Giving and Receiving Advice”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 21:1-14 and selected passages**

1. Why did Luke and the disciples in Tyre plead for Paul not to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4)? If you were in their situation, would you have done the same thing? If Paul knew through the Spirit (Acts 19:21; 20:23; cf. 23:11) that he must go to Jerusalem, how could these men urge him not to go “through the Spirit?”
  
2. How can you tell if your advice to someone is motivated by your desire to protect the person as opposed to your desire to see them carry out God’s purposes in the world? Can these two motivations ever agree (Acts 9:23-25; 2 Corinthians 11:32; Acts 19:8-9, 29-30)? Ultimately, how should you respond (Philippians 4:6-7; Psalm 62:5-8)?
  
3. Does Agabus’ prophecy seem strange (Acts 21:10-11)? The Holy Spirit clearly gave Agabus this message. How could Luke and the disciples in Caesarea still urge Paul not to go (Acts 21:12)?! Who would you want to protect in similar a situation (children, a spouse, a friend)? Would you be able to release them to the Lord?
  
4. If you were Paul, how would you have evaluated the pleadings/advice from these friends (cf. Proverbs 12:15; 13:10; 15:22)? How do you discern whether or not counsel is man-centered or God-centered (1 Samuel 24:4-7; Job 2:9; 42:7; Matthew 16-23)?

5. How did Paul effectively affirm the emotions of his friends, while still remaining faithful to the task that God had called Him to carry out (*Acts 21:13*)? How did Paul model the life of discipleship to which Jesus calls His followers (*Matthew 10:39; 19:29*)?
  
6. Paul knew that he would face trials if he continued on to Jerusalem (*Acts 20:23*), yet he would not be dissuaded from the task at hand (*Acts 21:14*). Have you tried to avoid trials, even when the Lord says "go" (*Jonah 1:2-3*)? What can we learn from Paul's example here?
  
7. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, do you consider your life as nothing (*Acts 20:24*)? What holds you back from more fully embracing God's cause, which is greater than ourselves? Can you say with integrity that you want His will to be done (*Luke 9:51; 22:42*)?

**Memory Verse:**

**"Then Paul answered, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.'"**

**(Acts 21:13, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 39:**  
**“Must I Care What People Think?”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 21:15-26 and selected passages**

1. Notice the deep relationships that Paul had established during his ministry throughout Asia Minor (*Acts 21:15-17*)? What does this tell you about the importance of relationships (*Proverbs 15:22*) as well as the impact of Paul’s ministry among these people (*2 Thessalonians 2:8*)?
  
2. What about you? Do you have a similar network of relationships? Who are the people in your life who support and admonish you just as Paul’s friends did for him? Why are these relationships essential to us and our survival (*Acts 2:42; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24-25*)?
  
3. Why is it significant that Paul addressed James (*James 1:1*) and the other Jewish elders in the Jerusalem church (*Acts 21:18*)? What did Paul report to them (*Acts 21:19; cf. 14:27; 15:4*)? How was this report received (*Acts 21:20*)?
  
4. Look back at *Acts 15* (especially verses 1-2 and 10-12) for some background on the section that follows here in chapter 21. What was the misunderstanding of many Jewish Christians (*Acts 21:20-21*)? Why might they have thought this (*Acts 15:1, 19; Galatians 5:6*)?

5. Why did the church leaders in Jerusalem recommend that Paul help these four men fulfill their vows (*Acts 21:23-24; Numbers 6:2-5; Acts 18:18*)? What were they afraid would happen to Paul (cf. *Acts 21:27-28*)? How would his facilitation of these men's vows have helped him?
  
6. Why did the leaders in Jerusalem choose these three stipulations for Gentile Christians to follow (*Acts 21:25; cf. 15:19-20, 29*)? Should we abide by these stipulations today? Why or why not (*1 Corinthians 10:28; Revelation 2:14; Genesis 9:4; Deuteronomy 12:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:3*)?
  
7. Paul had "died to the law" through faith in Christ (*Romans 7:6*). How did his purification of himself (*Acts 21:26*) demonstrate his willingness to do whatever he could to win others for Jesus Christ (*1 Corinthians 9:19-23*)? What do you need to do differently in order to do the same?

**Memory Verse:**

**"When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: 'You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law.'"**

**(Acts 21:20, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 40:**  
**“Another Way to Say Evangelism”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 21:26-22:22 and selected passages**

1. In *Acts 21:27-29*, we see that the mob reacted based only on what a few Jews said about Paul (see Jesus' experience in *Matthew 27:20-26*). Have you made assumptions about another, or cast judgment on them as the Jews did to Paul and Jesus? What does Jesus teach about this (*John 8:1-11* or *Matthew 7:1-5*)?
  
2. Why did Paul speak Greek to the Roman soldier (*Acts 21:37*)? Why did he speak Hebrew to the Jewish crowds outside of the barracks (*Acts 21:40; 22: 2*)? Why did Paul mention his Jewish schooling and training to this crowd (*Acts 22:3-5; cf. 1 Corinthians 9:20-23*)?
  
3. Why is it significant that Paul mentions his direct encounter with Jesus Christ in *Acts 22:6-8* (*Acts 9:3-6; cf. John 1:14; 1 John 1:1-3; 2 Peter 1:16*)? Have you ever had a similar direct encounter with Jesus? If not, how did you “encounter” Jesus?
  
4. Did you have an individual like Ananias in your life who helped you when you first believed (*Acts 22:12-16; 9:17-19*)? Who was that person and how did they help you grow? Have you ever been an “Ananias” to someone else? What have you learned through the process?

5. Did Paul's water baptism wash away his sins (Acts 22:16)? How are we to understand this verse in light of *Ephesians 2:8-9* and *Titus 3:5*? What other plans did God have for Paul, which Paul didn't expect (Acts 22:18, 21; 9:15)? Did God surprise you with His "change of plans" for your life shortly after you believed in Jesus Christ?
  
6. How does Paul's testimony serve as a helpful example for us when we share the gospel with others (*Romans 1:16*)? Have you ever attempted to share your "story" with others in an attempt to share Jesus Christ with them? What happened? Why did these crowds still not believe Paul after he shared all of these words (Acts 22:22)?
  
7. Would you be prepared to share your testimony if someone asked you to do so today? Why is it essential that we are always prepared (*2 Timothy 4:2; 1 Peter 3:15*)? How can you prepare yourself and who can you share your story with this week?

**Memory Verse:**

**"And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.'"**  
**(Acts 22:10, NASB)**



4. Was it right for Paul to tell the centurion about his Roman citizenship in Acts 22:25? Why or why not? If we are told to lay down our lives for the sake of Jesus Christ (Luke 9:23-24), then how could Paul insist on his rights as a Roman citizen?
  
5. We know that Jesus Himself did not insist on His rights when He was flogged and crucified (Matthew 27:27-31; Isaiah 54:7). In fact, Jesus denied Himself many privileges while here on earth (Philippians 2:5-8). What makes Paul's situation different than that of Jesus Christ (Acts 19:21; 23:11)?
  
6. How might you utilize your American citizenship as a means of furthering the gospel of Jesus Christ? How can you personally reconcile standing up for your rights while also laying down your life and denying yourself for the gospel (Luke 9:23)? What will that look like for you this week?

**Memory Verse:**

**“As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, ‘Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn’t even been found guilty?’”**

**(Acts 22:25, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 42:**  
**“Should My Conscience be My Guide?”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 23:11, 24:16 and selected passages**

1. How would you define “conscience?” Do you believe that every person has a conscience (cf. *Romans 2:14-15*)? Why or why not? Is a person’s conscience different from their “gut instinct?” Why or why not?
  
2. How could Paul say that he had a good and blameless clean before God (*Acts 23:1*) and men (*Acts 24:16*)? What did he mean? How should his words (and life) serve as an example for us to follow (*2 Corinthians 1:12*; *1 Peter 3:15-16*)?
  
3. What is the relationship between a person’s conscience and the Holy Spirit? Are they the same or distinct? Does the Spirit convict us? Does our conscience? Do both? How can we ensure that we are being transformed by the Holy Spirit (*Galatians 5:25*; *Romans 12:2*)?
  
4. How would you define a “good” or “clear” conscience (*1 Timothy 1:5, 18-19; 3:9; 2 Timothy 1:3*)? Why is this so important to maintain? Would you describe your conscience as good/clear before God and man right now?

5. How would you describe a “seared” conscience (*1 Timothy 4:1-2; Ephesians 4:18-19*)? How is it different from a “defiled” conscience (*Titus 1:5*)? Are you making any choices that are contributing to your conscience being “seared” or even “defiled” (*Colossians 3:1-3*)?
  
6. Do you ever struggle with having a “weak” conscience that is immature or oversensitive (*1 Corinthians 8:11-12*)? Are you causing someone else who is “weak” to stumble on account of your behavior (*Romans 14:22-23; 1 Corinthians 8:9-10, 13*)?
  
7. In light of these truths, how do you need to cleanse your conscience? What do you need to confess to God or to another? Where do you need to extend forgiveness (*Matthew 11:25*)? Do you really believe that you are spiritually “clean” because of the work of Jesus Christ (*Hebrews 9:13-14; 10:19-23*)?

**Memory Verse:**

**“In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.”**  
**(Acts 24:16, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 43:**  
**“Courageously Witness or Cowardly Withdraw”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 23:1-11 and selected passages**

1. Why is it significant that Paul would claim to have a good conscience before God when talking to the Sanhedrin (*Acts 23:1*; cf. *24:16*)? How did Paul’s confidence in the truth of Jesus Christ give him courage to say such a thing to this group of men?
  
2. Why did Ananias order Paul to be slapped (*Acts 23:2*)? What does Paul mean when he calls Ananias a “whitewashed wall” (*Acts 23:3*; *Matthew 23:27-28*)? Was Paul sinning by saying this (*Acts 23:4*; *Exodus 22:28*)? How did Paul not recognize the high priest (*Acts 23:5*)?
  
3. Why did Paul mention his belief in the resurrection of the dead in front of these men (*Acts 23:6*)? Why did this issue cause such a sharp dissention and uproar between the Pharisees and Sadducees (*Acts 23:7-9*; *Matthew 22:23*)?
  
4. Was Paul being devious by bringing up the resurrection at this point? What is the significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (*Romans 4:25*)? How does the resurrection of Jesus Christ relate to our own resurrection, which is our future hope (*1 Corinthians 15:12-14, 19-22*)?

5. How would Paul's belief in the resurrection give him *courage* to share the truth of Christ with the Sanhedrin (*Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:8*)? Does your belief in the resurrection give you similar courage? Why or why not?
  
6. Notice how quickly the Pharisees argued for Paul's innocence (*Acts 23:9*). Why were they so easily persuaded to "join forces" against the Sadducees? Why was their dissention dangerous? Have you ever witnessed similar dissention among Christians? How does God feel about dissention (*Psalm 133:1; Romans 15:5; Ephesians 4:3*)?
  
7. Do you think Paul was encouraged by Jesus' words to him in *Acts 23:11* (cf. *18:9*)? How are these words an encouragement for us as we share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others today (*Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 8:31-32*)? Do these words give you *courage* to share that message? Are you ready to share that message this week?

**Memory Verse:**

**"The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, 'Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.'"**  
(*Acts 23:11, NIV*)



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 44:**  
**“God’s Protection Service”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 23:11-35 and selected passages**

1. Describe a time in your life when you experienced God’s providential protection. What happened? How do you know that God was involved and not just “chance?” What are some other biblical examples of God’s providential protection?
  
2. Why were the Jews in this passage so intent on killing Paul (*Acts 23:12-13; 2 Corinthians 11:23*)? Do you find their zeal to be frightening (*Romans 10:2-3*)? What does their inclusion of the Council and chief priests reveal about the corruption of the Jews’ leadership (*Acts 23:14-15; Proverbs 29:12*)?
  
3. Consider the fact that Paul’s nephew overheard the Jews’ plot to kill Paul (*Acts 23:16*). Consider also the fact that the Roman commander listened to Paul’s nephew in private (*Acts 23:19*). How do you see God specifically orchestrating these circumstances?
  
4. How did the Roman commander respond to the news (*Acts 23:23*)? Why did he order such a large entourage to protect this one man Paul? What was his responsibility to the citizens of Rome (*Acts 23:27; cf. 22:29*)?

5. Think about other examples of God's providential protection: Moses (*Exodus 2:2-9*), Joshua and Caleb (*Joshua 2:1-3, 6*), David (*1 Samuel 19:1-2*). Then consider those who died carrying out God's work: John the Baptist (*Matthew 14:8-12*); Stephen (*Acts 7:58-59*), Jesus Christ (*Luke 23:46-47*). Why does God protect some of His people while letting others die?
  
6. How has this passage opened your eyes to God's providential care and protection of His people? Whenever His people are spared, what is God ultimately accomplishing (*Romans 8:29*)? Is He simply protecting their lives or is He up to more than that (*Genesis 50:20*)?
  
7. How has this passage encouraged you to pray for those who are serving Jesus Christ around the world? How might our prayers impact God's protection of those individuals? How else can you or your Community Group encourage and support those individuals just as folks did so for Paul (*Ephesians 6:18-20*)?

**Memory Verse:**

**"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."  
(Romans 8:28, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 45:**  
***"They know the Truth, so Why don't they believe it?"***  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 24:1-27 and selected passages**

1. These Jews were determined to wipe out Paul, weren't they! After five days of preparation, the high priest, some elders, and an attorney come before Governor Felix (Acts 24:1). Why were they so determined? Why didn't they simply sweep this issue under the rug (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16)?
  
2. How many of the charges against Paul in Acts 24:5-8 were true (cf. Acts 19:26-29; 24:12-13)? How does the lawyer, Tertullus, spin the facts to make them appear to be true? What is God's perspective on this sort of behavior (Luke 11:46-52)?
  
3. Why did Paul so clearly reference the resurrection (Acts 24:15)? What will this event be like (Daniel 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 51-53)? He notes that the resurrection is his hope. Do you share this same hope (1 Corinthians 15:56-58)? Why or why not?
  
4. Governor Felix had a thorough understanding of the Christian faith (i.e. the "Way," Acts 24:22). Do you know anyone who understands the facts of Christianity, but refuses to believe in Christ? Why do they refuse to believe (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)?

5. Why did Felix send for Paul to speak about Jesus to him and his wife, Drusilla (Acts 24:24)? Who do you know that is spiritually “hungry” or “seeking” (cf. Acts 8:27-31; John 7:37)? Have you been able to share your faith with them? What happened?
  
6. Why did Felix become afraid when he heard Paul speaking about righteousness, self-control, and God’s coming judgment (Acts 24:25; John 16:7-11)? After two years, Felix had still not believed in Jesus Christ (Acts 24:27)! If you were Paul, would you have been frustrated by this fact?
  
7. Do you believe that a person’s heart must be transformed rather than their head in order to believe? How would the “heart approach” change your evangelism? How should you pray for those family and friends who do not know Jesus Christ? Do you believe that your prayers will be answered (1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9)?

**Memory Verse:**

**“Having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”**  
(Acts 24:15, NASB)



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 46:**  
**“How to Defend Yourself without Getting Defensive”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Selected passages from Acts 24-26**

1. Are you a naturally defensive person? How can you distinguish between an appropriate defense of yourself and being defensive? Where do you turn when you are tempted to become defensive during arguments or conflict (*Colossians 3:12*)?
  
2. Notice how the Jews bombarded Paul with false accusations (*Acts 24:5-6; 25:7*). Do you think Paul was scared during their accusations? Why or why not (*Acts 23:11; Philippians 4:6-7*)? How did Paul remain so calm in his responses (*Acts 24:8; cf. 26:24-25*)?
  
3. Have you ever been falsely accused by someone? Where you scared or did you have peace? Notice how Paul remained cordial throughout the various “hearings” that he experienced (*Acts 24:10; 26:2-3*). How did he do it? Where was Paul’s trust (*cf. Proverbs 3:5-6*)?
  
4. Where else have you seen false accusations brought upon an individual in the Bible (*Matthew 27:22-23; Isaiah 53:7; 1 Peter 2:22-23*)? How could the Jewish leaders falsely charge Jesus and Paul when such behavior was in violation of the Mosaic Law (*Exodus 23:7*)?

5. Do you tend to become irrational during arguments or conflicts? How can you be logical during arguments while also avoiding being defensive? How does Paul model for us the importance of remaining logical during argumentative discussions (Acts 22:2; 25:10-11; 26:24-26)?
  
6. Thinking about Paul's appearance before Felix, why did he appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:11)? What was at stake in Paul's experience during these hearings? How did Paul use these opportunities before Festus, Felix, and Agrippa for God's purposes (Acts 24:14-15, 26; 26:6-8, 19-20, 22-23, 27-29)?
  
7. In the end, while Paul modeled how to handle moments of conflict for us, his circumstances were very different than our typical arguments. Still, how can you specifically apply some of these principles to your conflict resolution skills? How can you remain cool, cordial, logical, and humble at the same time?

**Memory Verse:**

**"Paul replied, 'Short time or long—I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.'"**  
(Acts 26:29, NIV)



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 47:**  
**"The Five Tools of Evangelism"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 26 and selected passages**

1. Paul repeatedly refers to the Christian faith as one of "hope" (Acts 26:6-7; 23:6; 24:15; 28:20). Do you agree? Is the hope of the twelve tribes of Israel the same as our Christian hope? How does the resurrection from the dead relate to this hope (Acts 26:8; Romans 8:22-23; 1 Corinthians 15:19-22)?
  
2. How does Paul logically approach his evangelism here in Acts 26:6-8? Why is this approach important? Have you ever tried to logically dialogue with non-Christians about the gospel? What happened? Why do people reject the "common sense" message of the gospel (1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4)?
  
3. Paul begins to share his personal testimony by describing his past (i.e. life before he trusted Christ; Acts 26:9-11) and then he moves to his conversion experience (Acts 26:12-18). While our story may be different than Paul's, are you able to articulate your personal testimony?
  
4. Why is the Bible important to use in our evangelism (2 Timothy 3:16-17)? How did Paul use the Bible in his evangelism (Acts 26:22-23; cf. Luke 24:27)? What are some verses that you can use to explain the gospel (Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:8-10; John 3:16)?

5. What does “apologetics” mean and how does it differ, if at all, from logic? How can history and evidence help us to defend our faith (Acts 26:25-26)? Have you ever used apologetics in your evangelism (1 Peter 3:15; Colossians 4:5-6)? What happened when you used history and evidence to defend the gospel?
  
6. Notice Paul’s personal appeal to Agrippa in Acts 26:27-28. Why is this appeal so important in our evangelism? If this appeal is so important, what holds us back from asking people if they are ready to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior? How can we move past these hindrances (Matthew 28:20; Romans 1:16; Philippians 4:6-7)?
  
7. Which of the five tools of evangelism (Logic, Personal Testimony, the Bible, Apologetics, and Personal Appeal) do you need to employ more often in your evangelism? How can you develop your skill in handling this “tool?” Who can help you develop your skill?

**Memory Verse:**

**“And Paul said, ‘I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains.’”**

**(Acts 26:29, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 48:**  
**“Moving with God on the Detours of Life”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 25:13-26:23 and selected passages**

1. When have you experienced a significant “detour” to your plans in life (cf. *Romans 1:13*)? Are you confident that God introduced that detour? What happened? How can you best prepare for God’s supernatural detours in the future (*Proverbs 3:5-6; Psalm 90:12*)?
  
2. Skim through *Acts 25:13-27*. Can you see evidence of God’s sovereignly directed “detour” in Paul’s life? Why might He have taken Paul through these experiences? What good could have resulted from this “detour” (*Genesis 45:4 50:20; Romans 8:28*)?
  
3. Notice that even Festus is not sure why Paul is standing trial (*Acts 25:17-19, 26-27*). How does the absurdity of this trial highlight the fact that God’s plans often trump our own (*Proverbs 16:9*)? Do you think Paul viewed his time of his life as a waste (*Acts 26:2*)?
  
4. Why did Paul share about his early years in Judaism (*Acts 26:4-11; Galatians 1:13-14; Philippians 3:5-6*)? How did his sharing add credence to his story/defense? Has God ever used your past to minister effectively to others for the gospel?

5. Notice the most important “detour” of Paul’s life in *Acts 26:13-14*. For what specific purpose did God insert this detour into Paul’s life (*Acts 26:16-18; 9:15-16; Galatians 1:15-16*)? What do you think would have happened if Paul had refused to take this detour (cf. *Esther 4:13-14* perhaps)?
  
6. Thankfully, Paul took the detour that God had ordained for him to take (*Acts 26:19*). How do his life and ministry serve as an example to us (*Acts 26:20, 22*)? What is the crux of the message that Paul proclaims (*Acts 26:23; cf. 10:43; Isaiah 42:6*)? Can you proclaim this same message with similar confidence?
  
7. Think about the first question regarding “detours” in your life, but do so from the perspective of sharing the gospel. How has He take you on a detour in order to share His truth with someone? Are you willing to embark upon similar detours in the future? How can you “prepare” for these detours (*1 Peter 3:15-16*)?

**Memory Verse:**

**“But I have had God’s help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen — (23) that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.”**

**(Acts 26:22-23, NIV)**



4. What about individuals who have a “partial” belief in God, similar to Agrippa’s belief in the prophets (*Acts 26:27*)? Will they be saved if they have this partial understanding of the gospel? Why or why not (*Hebrews 1:1-2; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5*)? How can you use their partial understanding to explain the full gospel truth?
  
5. Have you ever known anyone who became a Christian a “short” time after they heard the gospel (*Acts 26:28; 2:38-41; 8:35-37*)? What happened? How can you explain their quick acceptance of the message? How is acceptance of the gospel connected to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ (*John 20:26-28*)?
  
6. After reading Paul’s words in *Acts 26:29*, how should we respond (*2 Timothy 4:2*)? Does your heart break, like Paul’s, for those that you know who do not know Jesus Christ (*Romans 10:1*)? How might our appeal to others urge them to consider the gospel? Who is God laying on your heart to pray for to trust in Christ for salvation?

**Memory Verse:**

**“Paul replied, “Short time or long — I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.”**  
(*Acts 26:29, NIV*)



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 50:**  
**"Be a Good Leader"**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 27 and selected passages**

1. Do you consider yourself to be a "leader?" If leadership is a spiritual gift (*Romans 12:8*), can people be made into leaders or must they be born leaders? What qualifies someone as a leader in your opinion? What are the dangers of poor leadership?
  
2. What leadership traits are displayed by Paul in *Act 27:10*? Who or what was Paul's focus when he expressed his concern? Who did the centurion listen to? Why is listening to correct advice essential for good leadership (*1 Kings 12:13-14; Proverbs 20:18*)? What "fast" is Luke referring to in *Acts 27:9* (*Leviticus 16:29-31*)?
  
3. What would you have felt if you were in the midst of this tumultuous storm (*Acts 27:14-15, 18-20; cf. Mark 4:37-38*)? Was Paul wrong in telling Julius and the crew that they should have listened to him or was he being a good leader (*Acts 27:21*)?
  
4. How does Paul model godly leadership when he admonishes those on the ship to take heart (*Acts 27:23-25*)? Does he prepare them well by communicating the entire truth, the good, the bad, and the ugly (*Acts 27:26*) without backing down?

5. In the face of trials and adversity, how does Paul continually serve as a strong leader (*Acts 27:30-32*)? Have you ever had to take a similar stand in your leadership? What happened? How was Paul's relationship with God connected to his understanding of what God would do? What about you – do you know God's heart like Paul did?
  
6. What characteristics of leadership does Paul model in *Acts 27:33-36* (see also the compassionate language he uses in writing *1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 11*)? How does Paul turn this situation into an evangelistic opportunity (*Acts 27:35*)? Do you believe that evangelism is an important part of leadership (*2 Timothy 4:5*)?
  
7. How did God sovereignly protect Paul's life (*Acts 27:42-43*)? Did God fulfill His promise made in *Acts 27:24*? How did Paul know that the journey would be dangerous and yet everyone on the ship would live? Given the numerous traits of leadership that Paul embodies, what are two areas of growth in leadership for you?

**Memory Verse:**

**“Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.”**  
**(Acts 27:25, NASB)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 51:**  
**“Snakes, Shipwrecks, and Knowing God’s Will”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 28:1-10 and selected passages**

1. Do you believe that your circumstances are dictated by “God’s will?” If so, how many of them? All of them, great and small, good and bad (cf. *Romans 8:28-29*)? Just the big events and decisions? How can you determine what God dictates and what He doesn’t (*Job 42:1-2*)?
  
2. How did God provide for the shipwrecked people (*Acts 28:2*)? Why is it easier to see “God’s will” when we’re provided with comfort (*Acts 28:10; Psalm 23:1; Philippians 4:19*) versus when we’re not (*Ruth 1:21; 1 Samuel 2:6-7; 1 Timothy 6:7-8*)?
  
3. Was it God’s will that Paul be bitten by a poisonous viper (*Acts 28:3*)? Have you been “snake bitten” (not literally) in life with afflictions that God placed in your life? What happened and how did you know that God was ordaining your circumstances (cf. *John 9:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:12*)?
  
4. Why did the inhabitants of Malta believe Paul had been bitten by this viper (*Acts 28:4*)? Do you adopt a similar perspective, that bad things happen to those to whom punishment is deserved? How might this perspective be dangerous?

5. Why was Paul able to shake the snake off of his hand without any harm (*Acts 28:5; Luke 10:19; Mark 16:17-18*)? Have you ever seen God supernaturally protect someone? Did you become more enamored with the individual or with God, who spared that individual?
  
6. What is the connection between God's will and evangelism (*Acts 28:7-9; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9*)? While we are not told that Paul shared the gospel, do you think that he did share that message on Malta (*Romans 1:16*)? Are you prepared to share this message should circumstances allow for an opportunity (*1 Peter 3:15*)?
  
7. Is God allowing for you to experience trials and challenges right now? Do you see these trials as God's will for your life? How might you need to change your perspective (*Job 1:21*)? Who can encourage you to accept God's will for better or worse? What insights might *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18* give us into "God's will?"

**Memory Verse:**

**"Be joyful always; (17) pray continually; (18) give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."  
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 52:**  
**“Starting’s Easy, Finishing’s Hard”**  
**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Acts 28:11-31 and selected passages**

1. Imagine you were Paul, having finally arrived in Rome (Acts 28:14). How encouraged must Paul have been when he saw some people from the church in Rome (Acts 28:15; Romans 1:7-12)? Who encourages you like this in your life when you are reunited with them?
  
2. Why did Paul gather some of the leaders of the Jews together to talk to them (Acts 28:17)? Were these Jewish men Christians or not? Why did Paul feel the need to justify himself before them (Acts 28:18-19; 23:1; 24:16; 1 Corinthians 4:3-4)?
  
3. Did Paul have a heart for the people of Israel (i.e. the Jews, Acts 28:20)? What did he desire for them more than anything else (Romans 9:1-5; 10:1-4)? How remarkable was Paul’s faithfulness to his God-given mission to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13; Galatians 2:7-9; Ephesians 3:8)?
  
4. How crucial was Paul’s attitude in helping him to finish strong in life (Philippians 1:12-13; 2:14-15; 4:11-13)? How might your attitude be keeping you from successfully finishing the mission that He has called you to in this life?

5. Notice Paul's evangelistic efforts in Acts 28:23-24. What was the essence or subject matter of his message here? Was Paul discouraged when some did not believe or did he trust in God's control over their salvation (Acts 28:24-28; Romans 8:28)? Why does Paul quote this Old Testament passage (Isaiah 6:9-10)?
  
6. Has God called you to something, which has been challenging for you to finish? What has distracted you from the mission? How have you fought through those distractions in order to accomplish the mission (2 Timothy 4:6-7; Hebrews 12:1-2)?
  
7. What kind of a legacy did the apostle Paul leave (Acts 28:30-31)? As you think about faithful men and women of God that you have known, what kind of legacy did they leave? What kind of legacy will you leave? What is the key to finishing life as a faithful follower of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:26-27; Philippians 3:10-14)?

**Memory Verse:**

**"And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, (31) preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered."  
(Acts 28:30-31, NIV)**



**Topeka Bible Church**  
**The Life of Paul, Episode 53:**  
**“The (Wo)Man God Uses to Change the World: Why Paul**  
**was so Great”**

**Community Group Study Questions**  
**Selected passages**

1. Paul was a modeled a Christ-centered life for the rest of us (*1 Corinthians 11:1*). When your life is over, what do you hope people say and write about you? How does God want to change you between now and the day of your death?
  
2. How important was humility to Paul’s success as a “servant/slave” who made an impact for Jesus Christ (*Romans 1:1; 6:18; 1 Corinthians 4:1; Philippians 2:3-4*)? Would others describe you as a humble servant of Christ? Why or why not?
  
3. What was Paul’s all-consuming purpose in life (*Acts 9:15; Romans 1:14-16; 2 Timothy 2:10*)? Do you see this as your purpose in life as well? What often holds you back from living with this purpose in mind? How can you re-align priorities to change this?
  
4. Paul refers to himself as a “soldier” who endures “hardship” (*2 Timothy 2:3*). Should we expect to endure the same kinds of hardship that he did (*2 Corinthians 11:23-28*)? What does Paul mean by being involved in “civilian affairs” (*2 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 2:20; Ephesians 6:11-12*)?

5. Paul also uses the imagery of an athlete (*2 Timothy 2:5; 4:7*). How is the Christian life like an athletic competition (*1 Corinthians 9:23-27; 1 Timothy 4:7-8; Hebrews 12:1*)? When Paul writes about winning the “prize,” is he talking about salvation or something else (*Philippians 3:14*)?
  
6. Finally, Paul references the farmer (*2 Timothy 2:6*). Paul labored for the gospel (*1 Corinthians 15:10*), but what was Paul’s “harvest” expectation (*1 Corinthians 15:51-58; Philippians 3:20-21; 2 Timothy 4:8*)? Do you labor for the gospel too? Do you share the same hope as Paul? Why or why not?
  
7. As we conclude the Life of Paul series, think back over the previous messages and studies. What are some of the most significant things you have learned through our nearly two years of study? How specifically has your life been changed? Can you say with authenticity that for you “to live is Christ and to die is gain” (*Philippians 1:21*)?

**Memory Verse:**

**“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.’”**  
(Acts 9:15, NASB)