

WEEK 2 - Acts 3-6

Canopy Guide // Fall Focus 2025: The Spirit Acts

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Use the questions below to kickstart a community building, all-play conversation that connects to our weekly topic. If your group meets for dinner, these might be great questions to share around a table.

- When you say something you know from experience and someone disputes or contradicts it, or even tries to silence you, how do you handle it?
- What is your reaction when a person or group affirms something, and then acts in exactly the opposite way?
- Do you think the earliest Christians (like in the book of Acts) always agreed completely on everything they thought or did? Why do you think that?

VIDEO INTRO: WEEK 2

STUDY GUIDE

It doesn't take long after the Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples at Pentecost for the church to face some serious hurdles as they seek to worship together and teach others what Jesus has done. The first believers faced opposition from the Jewish leaders who were worried about what they saw as a new sect within Judaism. And as the church practices radical generosity, challenges naturally spring up surrounding giving and taking care of each other.

Peter and John continue in their teacher's steps: healing the sick, speaking with boldness in the face of opposition, and teaching that Jesus is the Messiah. Their testimony to the Jewish leaders sets the tone for how Christians throughout Acts will address authorities. Rather than testify to their own actions, they point to Jesus as the reason for what they have done. They proclaim that it is through Jesus that the crippled man is now able to walk (Acts 4:10). And as for their preaching, "[they] cannot keep from speaking about what [they] have seen and heard."

Luke (the author of Acts) describes Peter and John as speaking with "boldness" (4:13). Later, the believers pray to speak with "boldness" (4:29). However, the kind of boldness

demonstrated is not militant or rash. This is a humble kind of boldness: it was not belligerent or aggressive, it did not demean others, but it was an attitude of both authority and compassionate love.. After they've prayed we read, "the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). They receive boldness from the Holy Spirit to speak *God's word*. They testify with boldness - but only to what has been revealed to them through Jesus. Whatever ability they have as preachers or healers is only because of the work of the Holy Spirit through them.

Interwoven throughout these stories of proclamation in the face of persecution are some glimpses of life among the first believers. These glimpses of the life of the early church paint a beautiful and convicting picture of the kind of community Jesus wants the church to be. At the end of Acts 4, Luke offers a brief description of the generosity of the early church based on a radical rethinking of possessions: "Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common" (Acts 4:32-37).

Just as the believers testified that it was in the power of Jesus to heal, and declared the word of God; they also recognized that their possessions were not their own, but a gift from God for the sake of the church. Perceiving themselves as one new family in Christ, they shared freely the things that others in their family might need. They were generous to such an extreme that there was no selfish sense of ownership.

The Spirit brings boldness to the first believers. Peter and John are bold to testify to the new life Jesus brings as Messiah in the face of persecution. They are bold to direct the power of the Holy Spirit to heal the sick. And the church is bold to give up the possessions and land they rely on for the sake of those in need. In each case, this boldness is not for personal gain but for the sake of demonstrating God's sovereign rule to the world. Their lives were changed, and it showed up in countless ways!

Scripture to Read: Acts 3-6

This semester we're challenging our canopies to read the book of Acts in total. This study will be the most meaningful if you read the chapters you'll discuss ahead of time individually AND if you read the week's chapters during your group meeting time aloud together. You can read individually all in one setting or parse it out through your week. The Bible app has a great audio version of the Bible you can use as well.

General Discussion Questions:

What's something in this week's reading you have questions about?

What is something in this week's reading that makes you think about your own life of faith?

Deeper Discussion Questions

Acts 3:

Peter's address in the temple (Acts 3:11-26) culminates in him reminding his audience of the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 12: "And in your descendants, all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Acts 3:25). How does Peter connect that promise to Jesus? What do you think that promise means for the world and for church today?

Acts 4:

At the end of this chapter, there is a beautiful description of how the first believers shared their possessions (Acts 4:32-72). How do you share your possessions? How might God's Spirit be prompting you to live with greater generosity?

Acts 5:

When the apostles are brought before the council of Jewish leaders, the Pharisee Gamaliel advises the council not to choose violence against the Christ-followers, citing past would-be messiahs whose movements failed. He tells them instead to let things run their course - that time would tell if they were from God. What do you make of this advice? Have you ever made plans not knowing if God would bless it?

Acts 6:

At the beginning of this brief chapter, the leaders of the church find they have to recruit new leaders to the task of food distribution so they can focus on prayer and "serving the word" (Acts 6:4). What applications do you find for the church today in this story (Acts 6:1-6)?

PRAYER

Invite the Spirit to instill in our hearts a humble kind of boldness that breathes both truth and compassion through our words and actions.

EXTRA RESOURCES/ARTICLES/RESEARCH

1. <https://youtu.be/Wu3pZ2KZeN8?si=1bRb77xbyxLfceDC&t=784>
 - a. Sermon clip discussing Isaiah 32 and Acts 5 (start ~13.05).

An additional document full of resources that will benefit deeper study through the book

of Acts and the Holy Spirit can be found here:
<https://grandviewchristian.org/fallfocus2025/>