

WEEK 5 - Acts 14-17

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.

- Do you ever wish the Lord would give you a clear sign of where to go and what to do?
- Does following the Lord always feel clear and adventurous, or do you generally find the opportunities he provides seem more vague or mundane?

VIDEO INTRO: WEEK 5

STUDY GUIDE

Near the end of last week's readings, we heard the Lord asking the church to set Paul and Barnabas apart for the work the Lord wanted them to do. The church prayed, placing their hands on them, and sent them off to do the work.

That all sounds like the next steps would be clear, including a schedule, places, and contacts. Pay attention as you read Acts 14-17 to how Paul and Barnabas are not given much clarity for their journey, nor was the journey often exciting.

Paul and Barnabas started on their journey, without much clarity on their sense of direction, yet we are given a deep sense that the Holy Spirit is leading them. Their work was foundational in establishing the Gospel among the Gentiles.

This lets us know the Holy Spirit provides opportunities anywhere and everywhere we are. The Spirit inspires and enables us to serve and speak in whatever mundane experiences we have.

These chapters describe what appears to be a random journey, following opportunities as they arise. This leading of the Holy Spirit appears very mundane, as we said, but this underlines how the Spirit is with us, enabling us in every situation. Paul and Barnabas even had to deal with troublemakers who wanted these new Gentile Christians to

become Jews first. This experience seemed a delay, but the pressure from these folks was defused during a meeting in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit used this early dispute to highlight the reality that Jesus came to offer life to the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

After this, more folks were invited to join Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas then separated and went in different directions, taking other folks with them. You'd imagine this was a sensible decision, but it happened after Paul and Barnabas disagreed over whether to take a young believer named Mark. This contentious time was used by the Spirit to spread the Gospel even further than it would have been if Paul and Barnabas had stayed together.

At each step, the Lord blessed what they were doing, guiding them even in the most mundane and contentious moments.

At one point in these chapters, Paul has a vision of a man from Macedonia asking him to come and share the good news of life there. Even though the Holy Spirit did not clarify in the vision where in Macedonia Paul and Silas were to begin, they set off trusting in the promise of future guidance from the Spirit.

There are times the Holy Spirit provides explicit guidance, like inviting Peter to meet Cornelius. But for the most part, the Spirit's guidance is more vague, experienced in the routines of life, as disciples followed opportunities as they were presented.

Do we expect the Holy Spirit to lead us today? Let's consider and remind ourselves that the Spirit is more than ready and is leading primarily by enabling and prompting us as we live, ready to step out in every moment of life.

This is one of the points of this text. Begin following Jesus where you are, and share His love and promise of new life as you go. Now and then, specific guidance is provided, but for the most part, our invitation is to go. Every moment of our lives, from the mundane to the contentious, is part of our calling to serve Jesus.

Scripture to Read: Acts 14-17

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

1. Think about the teaching of this passage that the Holy Spirit leads us as we move through the mundane moments of life. Our task is to be ready to step into the opportunities that are in front of us. What does this look like in your life?
2. Have you ever had an experience where you felt led to a specific area or situation? What opportunity came out of that experience?
3. Think through all the aspects of your life, like work, shopping, family time, hikes, vacations, etc., as times when the Lord will likely use you to bless someone and share his love. Have you had experiences like this? If so, please share.
4. Can you think of a time of contention in your past that has resulted in the Holy Spirit moving in a way that you didn't expect?

PRAYER

Invite the Spirit to move and work through you and those in your group in your everyday circumstances. Pray that you will be more attentive to the Spirit's movement in the mundane.

EXTRA RESOURCES/ARTICLES/RESEARCH

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/>