

WEEK 6 - Acts 18-21

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.

- Have you ever followed a leading from the Spirit into something you knew would be difficult? What did that look like?
- What was a scenario in which you acted like Jesus would've?
- How did you encounter God since the last meeting / what were some holy moments?

[VIDEO INTRO: WEEK 6](#)

STUDY GUIDE

Buckle up! We've got a lengthier section to tackle this week. We see the founding of the Corinthian church, riots in Ephesus started by idol makers upset with Paul, and Paul heading to Jerusalem knowing full well he will be arrested there—and indeed, he was!

On a big picture level, we see Paul looking more and more like Jesus in the narrative of Acts. As Paul is being guided by the Holy Spirit, his life begins to mirror the life of Jesus in some interesting ways. We can see Paul's ministry being considered a threat to the religious institutions that are earning profits in Ephesus (compare this to Jesus being considered a threat to the Temple and institutions in Jerusalem). Paul prays for unity in his farewell speech, similar to Jesus' prayer for unity in the Upper Room. Paul was even arrested over a conflict concerning his ministry. All of these are ways that the Holy Spirit was molding Paul, shaping him to be more like Jesus. Through this example, we can also look for ways the Holy Spirit is shaping us, molding us to be more like Jesus.

We see the Holy Spirit active throughout, compelling Paul to go forward, and ultimately shaping Paul more and more into the image of Christ. As Paul would write to the Corinthians, "We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the

Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Cor 3:18).

From the earliest days of the church this idea of the Holy Spirit continually shaping us into Christ’s image is talked about in many different ways. Sanctification is probably the main way you’ve heard this discussed, but different parts of the Church (especially our Orthodox sisters and brothers) historically have discussed this through the idea of *theosis* (2 Peter 1:4). That is, the aim of the Christian life—and really, of humanity—is to participate in the divine nature. (In the resources section, you can find more information about this idea of theosis, if you are interested.) Throughout Church history, these ideas have permeated the study of the Holy Spirit, and the chapters that were read for today are wonderful examples of the Holy Spirit sanctifying Paul, guiding him to become more Christlike. The life and actions of Jesus communicate the character of God to us – we see God caring for the poor, healing the sick, stooping down to wash feet, and giving Godself to and for others. Here in Acts, we can see Paul looking more and more like Jesus in his actions, life, teachings, prayers, and in his submission to the leading of the Holy Spirit—and all of this is from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Scripture to Read: Acts 18-21 (~21 min)

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. What details stood out to you as you heard it read? Where did you see Paul’s actions look like Jesus’s?
2. In what ways have you seen yourself (or others) look more and more like Jesus as you continue in your faith?
3. What do you think it means to participate in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:3-8)? What would you expect to see in someone’s life?

PRAYER

See if people have any prayer requests. The following prayer may be used to close.

Lord, may we be drawn to the holy mystery of Your Word made flesh to dwell among us in order that we may, by Your Spirit of Life and Resurrection, be raised up into divine communion with You. Transform us in love evermore into the image of Your Christ in word and action, and guide our feet in His way of peace. Amen.

EXTRA RESOURCES/ARTICLES/RESEARCH

1. <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DHtjTJ1vbd7/?igsh=dWQ1OWNybjNrb2h6>
 - a. An interview clip with a Coptic priest about how they see *theosis* on a practical level.
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjsiwOB0Pvg>
 - a. Bible Project video on Acts 21-28. This will bleed into later weeks, but the video illustrates the idea of Paul looking more like Jesus further in Acts.
3. <https://dphx.org/tob-tuesdays-14>
 - a. Catholic discussion of participating in the divine nature.

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/>