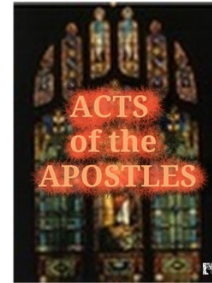


Ways to do the church-wide Acts Bible Study

1. Use this insert by yourself or with a partner.
 - Commit to spending 1 hour each week
 - Consider partnering with someone to whom you are not related
2. Form a small group to discuss the questions together
3. Come to the retreat on Saturday, January 30 from 9-3 and watch the Bible on video and talk about it with others. Lunch included.
4. Use the online Bible Study at www.StPetersSaints.com
 - Find the Practicing our Faith page and then click on Reading the Bible

Pathways for Faith
www.StPetersSaints.com



DISCOVERING OUR MISSION CHURCH-WIDE STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Insert #4

Truth, Martyrdom, Persecution, and Baptism

The early church was intimate, had everything in common, and lived with a high degree of trust in God and in each other. By agreement, believers sustained the church with their own assets, donated at 100% value. When Ananias and Sapphira schemed to deceive for personal gain, there were serious consequences. God will not be mocked.

The faithful apostles continued to preach the message of Jesus Christ, providing a pathway for both Jews and Gentiles to become disciples of Jesus. Their work was accompanied by signs and wonders of the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus was in his time. As a result of the persistent preaching and teaching, the church grew.

The growth of the Christian movement threatened the Jewish religious establishment, who tried unsuccessfully to use political means to put a stop to the ministry of the Gospel.

The growth of the church also put stress on the community of faith. The initial Jewish Christians took care of their own, but did not expand their ministry to include the newer Greek-speaking believers. All agreed this was important, but more people were needed to do it. Also, it was important that these deacons be of good reputation and full of the Spirit and wisdom. They were set apart by the laying on of hands and prayer. Stephen was their leader, and his life is about to get very interesting...

- Trust God with 100% of your life
- Do not fear the growth —or the rejection — that comes when the Gospel is preached and lived
- Choose church leaders wisely, according to the Spirit

Week 4
STUDY GUIDE

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS
Acts Chapters 7&8

Read: Acts chapters 7&8

For Reflection:

1. Was Stephen's testimony defensive or offensive? Why?
2. What was the basis of his answer?
3. What was the reaction to Stephen's contrast of the faithful God and faithless religious leaders?
4. What telling gesture did the religious leaders make when Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, spoke out about his vision of Jesus and the Father?
5. What was Stephen's last act before dying?
6. What was Simon's problem? How was it resolved?
7. Why did the eunuch want to be baptized?

Go Deeper:

1. What would happen if we did not shrink from telling the Bible's story to those who may disagree?
2. Why was it possible for Stephen to face death?
3. What are the forces in our church that try to maintain power by closing their ears to the truth?
4. Would focusing on the Word of God and obeying the Holy Spirit cause trouble for us? Why or why not?
5. Who initiated the conversation with the Ethiopian?
6. From what does Baptism get its power to change lives?
7. What does this Word suggest for the life of St. Peter's

For Further Study go to www.StPetersSaints.com

Write your responses to the following questions and tear off this page and leave it in the Response Box at church, OR leave them on the feedback page of the Pathways for Faith website, OR e-mail them to Chris Kann qcic5131@comcast.net.

1. What is God doing in these two chapters?
2. What are people doing in these two chapters? (sometimes at odds with God)
3. What lessons are here for the church in that day?
4. What lessons are here for the church today?
5. What is this telling us about a possible vision purpose for our ministry?