



1 Peter 1:15-16 NIV

Titus Women Bible Study

The Secret to Supernatural Living - A Continued Study on the Book of Acts

Welcome back to Titus Women's Bible Study! This semester we are continuing in our theme of "Supernatural Living" as we resume our study on the book of Acts.

As we begin our study of Acts, many of us have been burdened by the state of our country and crying to God for revival and for His mercy in this pivotal election year. We take this first week to hear from God as He spoke through Beth at the Lydia Prayer Conference. So before we study Paul's missionary journeys, let's take this week to hear from Jesus for our own hearts and lives, so that we are clean and wholly His as we begin this semester.

A Review of Acts

Prayerfully read the book of Acts this week to refresh your mind. If we read 4 chapters of Acts every day, we will have read through the entire book in a week! As you read, highlight the scriptures God lifts out to your heart. Write them in your prayer journal and meditate on them. Let them prepare your heart for prayer.

Ask God what He is saying to you through His Word. Are there any areas in your life He is speaking to you about?

Listen and wait in His presence to hear and then determine in your heart to obey.

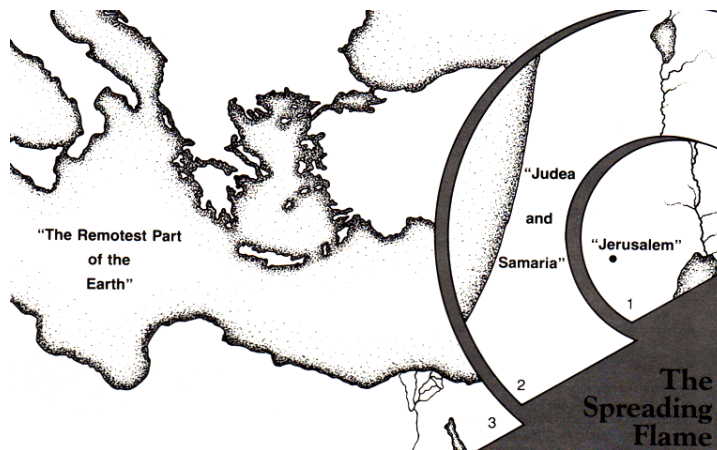
If there is a question in your heart, call your small group leader or a close friend and ask her to be a prayer partner with you to pray over the things Jesus is showing you from His Word.

Tea Time With Mary:



The Book of ACTS

Key Verse: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8



Application:

... you will be My witnesses... *Do you lift up Jesus or self?*

The word "witness" occurs twenty-nine times in Acts. All of God's people are expected to be witnesses. Oswald J. Smith said, "The light that shines the farthest will shine the brightest at home."

... in Jerusalem... *Being a witness begins in your home...*

... in all Judea and Samaria... *then in your neighborhood, church, school, work area - any personal contacts.*

... and to the ends of the earth. *Some go in person; some give money; but all can pray for the world.*

Author and Overview:

"Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught"(Luke 1:1-4).

"In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach" (Acts 1:1).

Luke is the author of the book of Acts. He is the only Gentile writer in the New Testament. (Col. 4:14) The book of Acts is a sequel to the Gospel of Luke—what Christ continued to do through the Holy Spirit. Acts is a bridge. It spans from the life of Christ to the life of the Christian. In the Gospels, Jesus models Christianity; in Acts, everyday people like us, model Christianity. Acts is the account of the work of the Holy Spirit in and through ordinary people.

The book of Acts ends with Paul under house arrest, yet still proclaiming Christ with his every breath. Paul's ministry was not over, and neither was Acts. "The Book of Acts is an unfinished book for it is still being written"—in your life and the lives of all Christians who carry Christ's flame (light) into a darkened world. When good news touches our lives it naturally and joyfully flows from our lips. There is no greater News than that of the Gospel Message – the birth, the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our sins. (Ephesians 2:4-9)

Acts is a book of beginnings. It records...

- The coming of the Holy Spirit
- The Covenant of Grace instead of Law
- The first local church...
- The first deacons and elders...
- The first missions movement...
- The first Gentile Christians...
- The first use of spiritual gifts...
- The first persecutions and martyrs...

Outline of Acts

Acts 1:8 gives an outline for the book of Acts.

- Acts 1-7** **The Church Established at Jerusalem** - emphasis is mainly to the Jews – 2 years
The church is . . .
 born . . .
 tested . . .
 purified . . .
 strengthened . . .
• Peter is the main leader.
- Acts 8-12** **The Church Scattered to Judea and Samaria** - emphasis is to Jews & Gentiles – 13 years
The gospel is . . .
 spreading . . .
 multiplying . . .
 changing lives . . .
 breaking traditions . . .
• Peter is the main leader
• The Holy Spirit used persecution to push the believers beyond their secure walls and into the surrounding countryside. *“On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.”* (Acts 8:1b) This was a stretching time of transition for the Christian Jews.
- Acts 13-28** **The Church Extended to “Remotest Part”** - emphasis is mainly Gentiles – 15 years
The witness is . . .
 extended . . .
 received and rejected
 unifying Jews and Gentiles
• Paul is the main leader.
• Three missionary journeys explained.
• The rest of the world needed to hear the Gospel message so the Holy Spirit moved once more and called. *“In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”* (Acts 13:1-3) The church is extended to the remotest part of the earth.
- Application:** Dr. Charles Swindoll writes: “Like the early church, we go through phases or stages of . . .
establishing - As new Christians, we enter a period of putting down roots. It’s a nurturing time when Christ holds us close to Himself, often protecting us from many of life’s pains and giving us a sturdy foundation. Then, according to His timetable, the next phase begins.
scattering - Persecution and pain, discomfort and disappointment are the watermarks of this stage, as Christ allows trials to wash over our lives. This may bring literal scattering—moving away from family and friends. Or it may mean an emotional scattering—a deep suffering that comes from broken relationships or topsy-turvy circumstances. Through such times, the Lord strengthens us so that, eventually, we enter another phase of life.
extending - Having profited from life’s buffeting, we become seasoned, mature servants of Christ - cracks and all. Here He uses us as proven and worthy vessels that overflow with the message of Christ’s power, unhindered.

Which stage or phase do you think you are in now? *Establishing* *Scattering* *Extending*

Whether God is establishing, scattering, or extending you, you can be sure of one thing, *“that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 1:6) He will bring to maturity the work He started in your life as you surrender to the Holy Spirit’s control. Through this process, you must be willing to trust His plan for you.

Prayer

Prayer is in almost every chapter of Acts. Warren Wiersbe writes: "Prayer is both the thermometer and the thermostat of the local church; for the "spiritual temperature" either goes up or down, depending on how God's people pray." John Bunyan said, "Prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to Satan."

St. Augustine said, "Pray as though everything depended on God, and work as though everything depended on you." Prayer is not an escape from responsibility; it is our response to God's ability. True prayer energizes us for service and battle. Prayer is not telling God what to do, but asking God to do His will in us and through us. (John 5:14-15) The emphasis is on the hand of God at work in their lives (Acts 4:28, 30), not the hand of man at work for God. Believing prayer releases God's power and enables God's hand to move (Isaiah 50:2; 64:1-8). Dr. R. A. Torrey – "Pray for great things, expect great things, work for great things, but above all—pray."

Jeremiah 29:13; 33:3 *"You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD.... "Call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."*

Luke 11:9-10 *"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."*

John 15:7 *"If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."*

James 1:4-7; 2:3-4; 5:16-18 *"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;... "You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops."*

Application:

What is your prayer life like?

Do you pray earnestly – with your whole heart – according to God's will and for His glory?

Are you shocked when He answers?

Memory Verse:

Psalm 20:1 – *"May the LORD answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you."*

Children's Memory Verse:

5 year olds and homeschoolers – Isaiah 62:2 *"You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name."*

2 year olds through 4 year olds – Isaiah 62:2 *"You shall be called by a new name..."*

Prayer Concerns:
