
Small Group Discussion Guide — August 14, 2022

- Series: Church Alive - The Book of Acts
- Sermon: “With All Their Hearts”
- Scripture: Acts 11: 19-26

FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK

What was something in your life this week that was hard, but it has drawn you closer to the Lord? Have you been able to use your experience to help encourage someone else? Share, if so.

CONNECT

1. What stood out to you from this past week’s service, and why?
2. What’s the farthest from home you’ve ever been? Why were you there and what do you remember most vividly?

ENGAGE

Read Acts 11: 19-26.

1. What important development do you notice in verses 19 and 20? What was the result?
2. Why do you think the church leaders sent Barnabus to check on what was happening in Antioch? What did he find? What was his advice?
3. What else do these verses tell us about Barnabus’ heart?
4. Imagine you are a Jewish believer, maybe one who is still in Jerusalem and hearing about these developments. What might you be feeling and thinking in these early days of the Church?

APPLY

1. The Jews are commonly referred to as “God’s chosen people.” However, as David explained, they mistook their special place as something that was simply *for* them, not something that would happen *through* them. This misunderstanding caused them to remain insular regarding their faith, until God used persecution to push them out and carry the message of Jesus to people outside their community. How does this explanation of “God’s chosen people” compare with the way you’ve understood this phrase? What does it teach you about the role you have to play as a child of God? You are also called His Chosen! (John 15: 16)
2. As a Pharisee, Paul had studied under Gamaliel. However, as a follower of Jesus, his new mentor is Barnabus. A new relationship with Jesus may mean parting company with old relationships and forming new ones that are

centered on Christ. Have you ever encountered this situation? What happened, and how did you know a change was necessary?

3. When Barnabus visited the believers in Antioch, he encouraged them to “remain true to the Lord with all their hearts” (v. 23). This requires an *active* pursuit of God, driven by a heart that longs to know Jesus. Consider the following areas that this active pursuit will involve in a life of committed faith:

- Prayer
- Intentional Christ-centered relationships
- Scripture
- Worship (private and corporate)
- Mission

Considering these areas, how actively are you pursuing Jesus? Where do you need to grow? What steps will you take this week to move forward in this?

Dream - What might your life look like if you intentionally run after Christ every day? How might it affect your relationships? The Church? The world?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you that You love the whole world and it's your desire that all people come to know you. Thank you that because of the testimony of the early believers, we have come to know you as our true and loving Father. It's amazing that you've chosen us now to carry that message of salvation to others. Give us hearts that continually long for more of you. May our lives be so infused by your Spirit that we look and sound and act differently from the world around us. Help us to boldly tell them about Jesus when they ask about the hope they see within us. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

GOING DEEPER

Sometimes we are tempted to keep our faith private and not openly share it. Like many of the early believers, we may forget that God has chosen us to carry the message to the rest of the world. Who are people with whom you are reluctant to share the gospel? Why? This week, pray that God would move your heart towards them with compassion, and give you courage to intentionally share about the hope you have in Christ.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

Acts 9: 3-5

Genesis 12: 2-3

Acts 10: 34-36

Acts 4: 36

QUOTES

“A tiny minority spread across the Mediterranean thought nothing less than, in contradistinction to their surrounding society, that they possessed the true words of life - and they thought these words had to be taught.”

Kavin Rowe

“Try to make people happy and you make them miserable. Try to make people moral and you make them evil.”

Laozi (Lao Tzu)

“Peter had bound all the peoples of the world, except for his own race, into one loathsome bundle. God used a vision to bring a radical change in the attitude of the leading disciple of the early church, and it is a good thing He did. Otherwise Christianity would have been reduced to a narrow sect of Judaism, and you and I would have never heard the good news.”

Kent Hughes