

# The Book of Acts

*mtolivestpaul.org*

## 60-DAY BIBLE READING CHALLENGE

In this challenge, we make our way through the book of Acts, looking at the early days of the Christian Church, interspersed with readings from the letters of Apostle Paul sent to the churches being formed in the cities mentioned in Acts.

### WEEK 1

Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart. (Psalm 119:2)

PRAYER: **Lord, we desire to be a people who are truly blessed but our hearts do not always seek you. Help us to abandon those things that distract us from your Word and captivate our hearts. Amen.**

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DAY 1: Acts 1:1-4 & Luke 24:13-49

PONDER: Why do you think Jesus interacted with his disciples the way he did in the days after his death and resurrection?

DAY 2: Acts 1:4-11 & John 14:1-3, 16-18 & John 16:12-15

PONDER: Why was it necessary for Jesus to leave the apostles?

DAY 3: Acts 1:12-26

PONDER: What do you think about the apostles filling Judas' place?

DAY 4: Acts 2:1-13 & Matthew 16:21-28

PONDER: How do you feel about the external signs and the inward and unseen changes that occurred because of the Holy Spirit's presence?

DAY 5: Acts 2:14-21 & Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75

PONDER: What kind of changes do you see in Peter?

DAY 6: Acts 2:22-35

PONDER: What do you think is the significance of Peter's reference to David in this passage?

DAY 7: Acts 2:36-47

PONDER: What's your reaction to the group of believers, especially as seen in verses 42-47?

### WEEK 2

Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees! Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands. // Psalm 119:5-6

PRAYER: **We admit that our ways are not always firm and established. We sway to the left or to the right or avoid altogether doing what is right. Give us a committed heart to consider all your commands so that we will not be put to shame. Amen.**

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DAY 1: Acts 3

PONDER: If you were in the crowd during this miracle, how would you have reacted?

DAY 2: Acts 4:1-22 & Matthew 24:4-14

PONDER: How might Jesus' words have been an encouragement to Peter and John?

DAY 3: Acts 4:23-37 & Matthew 18:19-22

PONDER: What strikes you about the believers' prayer? And does it surprise you that the Holy Spirit has changed these believers to the point where they would share everything they had?

DAY 4: Acts 5:1-16

PONDER: How would you describe Ananias and Sapphira's actions? And why do you think their discipline is so severe?

DAY 5: Acts 5:17-42

PONDER: How does the apostles' demonstration of their faith and love for Christ through persecution make you feel?

DAY 6: Acts 6

PONDER: What do you learn about the nature and source of opposition?

DAY 7: Acts 7

PONDER: How does Stephen balance grace and truth in his response to the Sanhedrin?

## WEEK 3

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. // Psalm 119:11

PRAYER: **God, you have done so much for us, we do not want to turn from what is right. Let your word become more than intellectual; set fire to our hearts so that we will seek to do your will. Amen.**

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DAY 1: Acts 8

PONDER: What do you learn about God from the story of Philip, Simon, and Peter?

DAY 2: Acts 9:1-19

PONDER: What does persecution look like in our world today? And Saul was different after his encounter with Jesus. How are you different?

DAY 3: Acts 9:20-43

PONDER: How did the believers take care of Paul? And how can we take care of each other as believers?

DAY 4: Acts 10

PONDER: How would you describe Cornelius? What was missing in his life? And is anything missing in your life?

DAY 5: Acts 11

PONDER: After reading this section, what have you learned about God and following him?

DAY 6: Acts 12

PONDER: What interests you most about Peter's escape?

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For the next several days, we'll follow Peter through the letters he wrote to New Testament believers (we will return to Acts shortly). Peter is writing to encourage the fledgling church because it is experiencing difficult times. Peter reminds the church that the most essential change that happens in a person comes by faith in Jesus. Such faith awakens a living hope that can never be touched, damaged, or altered by any of life's events - it is kept in heaven for us.

DAY 7: 1 Peter 1

PONDER: What does Peter want us to know about Jesus?

## WEEK 4

With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth. // Psalm 119:13

PRAYER: **Holy God, teach us to value what it is that you say to us. May our words be a natural reflection of all that you share with us in your Word. Amen.**

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DAY 1: 1 Peter 2

PONDER: Which human authorities are difficult to submit to? How can Peter's words encourage us for difficult living?

DAY 2: 1 Peter 3

PONDER: What practical insights does Peter give us for living in a culture that is hostile to Christianity? After reading this, are there adjustments you would make to your life?

DAY 3: 1 Peter 4

PONDER: Does anything surprise you about Christians and suffering?

DAY 4: 1 Peter 5

PONDER: How does the reality of being a part of the family of believers make a difference in times of trouble?

DAY 5: Acts 13:1-31

PONDER: How might God be setting you apart for some specific work in his kingdom? Is that thought inspirational or challenging?

DAY 6: Acts 13:32-52

PONDER: What does the experience of Paul and Barnabas teach you about serving God?

DAY 7: Acts 14

PONDER: How does the experience of Paul and Barnabas in Lystra prepare us for sharing the gospel?

## WEEK 5

I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. // Psalm 119:14

PRAYER: **Holy Father, your Word is better than great riches. Help me to discover riches this week as I read your precious words. Amen.**

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DAY 1: Acts 15

PONDER: What do you learn about the discussion of controversial matters and conflict resolution within your church and among other believers?

DAY 2: Acts 16

PONDER: How are you challenged and/or encouraged by the opposition Paul and Silas faced?

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For the next couple days, we're going to shift and focus on the superiority of Jesus Christ as written about in the book of Hebrews.

DAY 3: Hebrews 1

PONDER: How do you feel about Jesus after reading this section of Scripture?

DAY 4: Hebrews 2

PONDER: What fears and temptations do you struggle with? How does the truth of Jesus' death bring freedom for you?

DAY 5: Acts 17

PONDER: What needs to develop in your life in order to be like the Bereans (Acts 17:11)?

DAY 6: Acts 18

PONDER: How did God encourage Paul? How has he encouraged you? How can you encourage someone else?

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The next several days we'll be going through the book of 1 Thessalonians. We read how Paul traveled to Thessalonica and Berea in Acts 17, and this is a letter written by Paul to the church there, encouraging them to live responsibly in this world.

DAY 7: 1 Thessalonians 1

PONDER: How is God speaking to you in this chapter about your life as a Christian?

## WEEK 6

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. // Psalm 119:18

PRAYER: **Lord God, your Word is filled with wonderful things; give me the drive and desire to discover all the delights and wonders of your Scriptures. Amen.**

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DAY 1: 1 Thessalonians 2

PONDER: In what ways can Paul's care for the Thessalonians reflect on your care for other believers?

DAY 2: 1 Thessalonians 3

PONDER: How have you experienced difficulty as a follower of Christ?

DAY 3: 1 Thessalonians 4

PONDER: How are you encouraged and challenged by these verses?

DAY 4: 1 Thessalonians 5

PONDER: What truths about the Lord's return are most precious to you?

DAY 5: Acts 19

PONDER: How do you wrestle through the difficulties and challenges of sharing your faith?

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We are taking another jaunt away from Acts and heading to the book of Ephesians. The city of Ephesus and the church there played a huge role in the early Christian Church. The apostle John was even known to settle down in Ephesus along with Mary, the mother of Jesus, as he took very seriously his responsibility to take care of her as his own mother.

DAY 6: Ephesians 1

PONDER: Journal thoughts around the idea that God has known about you since before the creation of the world and that he already had set in place a plan to bring you into his family.

DAY 7: Ephesians 2

PONDER: How does your daily life take on merit knowing that you were created in Christ Jesus to do good works?

## WEEK 7

My soul is consumed with longing for your laws at all times. // Psalm 119:20

**PRAYER: Lord God, I admire the writer of Psalm 119 for being consumed with longing for your Word, your laws, and your teachings. As I discover more and more by reading your Word, let my heart and mind also be consumed; may I hang on every word that comes from you. Amen.**

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DAY 1: Ephesians 3

PONDER: How does your daily prayer compare with the Apostle Paul's prayer?

DAY 2: Ephesians 4-5

PONDER: How might God be calling you to serve someone else's needs this week? How has God provided for your needs through someone else who has served you?

DAY 3: Ephesians 6

PONDER: What is your greatest spiritual battle and how can God's armor help?

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Philemon is a great book for helping us to better understand the different levels of society (slave and free for example) and how Christianity seeks to radically confront the abuses in such a culture. After all, is this not what we are called to do?

DAY 4: Philemon

PONDER: Paul is asking for a huge favor from Philemon. How has God stretched you in your daily living?

DAY 5: Acts 20

PONDER: How can you minister to those in distress around you?

DAY 6: Acts 21

PONDER: Have you ever faced accusations as a Christian, and how did you respond? What would you do differently?

DAY 7: Acts 22

PONDER: What would you share with people as your personal testimony (like Paul's) of how God has made a noticeable difference in your life? (In other words, "what is your personal testimony?")

## WEEK 8

Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors. // Psalm 119:24

**PRAYER: Lord God, there are so many voices and opinions in this world. I know that my heart and mind can be led into places they should not go. But you have provided me the most excellent counsel as I consider all your words. Amen.**

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DAY 1: Acts 23

PONDER: What would you share with people as your personal testimony (like Paul's) of how God has made a noticeable difference in your life? (In other words, "what is your personal testimony?")

DAY 2: Acts 24

PONDER: What fears have you experienced among non-believers? What is the hope that you have?

DAY 3: Acts 25

PONDER: How has God helped you in seemingly unsolvable challenges in your past?

DAY 4: Acts 26

PONDER: How would you describe your lifework and calling?

DAY 5: Acts 27

PONDER: How do you turn a crisis into an opportunity to talk about God?

DAY 6: Acts 28

PONDER: How might God use your unexpected changes in plans as a way to benefit others?

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This is our last segue, to the book of James. James was Jesus' younger half brother. He is a great testimony to the power of the gospel. From the Gospels we see that James did not believe Jesus was the Messiah until after the resurrection. He became a major figure in the New Testament church, especially at Jerusalem.

DAY 7: James 1

PONDER: How has God grown you and sustained you through trials?

PONDER: How do humility and submission fit into fights and trials?

## WEEK 9

I gave an account of my ways and you answered me; teach me your decrees. // Psalm 119:26

**PRAYER: Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Word made flesh. You dwelled with humanity to share the Word of God in living form -- perfectly. If we were to give an account for our ways, it would be embarrassing, especially as it stacks up to your holy nature. Yet we are so thankful that your record has now become ours. We are so thankful that you are living and growing in us by the Holy Spirit and through your Holy Word. Please teach our hearts and our minds to love your decrees and find joy in keeping your decrees. Amen.**

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DAY 1: James 2

PONDER: Why is favoritism so wrong and how do you work to avoid it?

DAY 2: James 3

PONDER: How has God been working on you personally in regard to your speech?

DAY 3: James 4

PONDER: How do humility and submission fit into fights and trials?

DAY 4: James 5