

Life! *Training*

Name:

Date:

Sold Out

*Getting the Apostle's
Passion for
Truth*

Welcome to this journey through the experiences and teachings of the apostolic church as recorded in the book of Acts and the Letters written by the apostles. As a member of His body, you will discover His treasures for those who take His Name and receive His Spirit.

Come to the Scriptures with a prayer-filled heart and open mind as you uncover truths for your life. Record these in the blanks provide to help keep yourself accountable in your daily growth. Talk to the Lord when you find yourself coming short in an area. Share with others the riches you find in His living Word.

Day 1: embellished Bible story.

Day 2-6: interactive journal devotions.

Day 7: contemporary stories of faith.

Unstoppable Boldness

The _____ is in the name of _____.¹

Those who receive _____ - _____ faith experience _____.²

Miracles invite the _____.³

_____ - hearts respond to a _____ approach.⁴

_____ - filled people _____ for God.⁵

Imposters want _____ and _____.⁶

Boldness moves men to _____ or _____ the gospel.⁷

We obey God's plan to _____ what He is _____.⁸

_____ your _____ with like-minded people.⁹

¹ Acts 3:6, 16; 4:7, 10, 12, 17-18, 30; 5:28, 40-41, 8:12, 16; 9:14-16, 21, 27-28; 10:43, 48; 15:14, 17, 26; 16:18; 19:5, 17; 21:13; 22:16; 26:9

² 2:43; 3:8; 4:21, 24, 5:41; 8:39; 11:23; 12:14; 13:48, 52; 15:3; 16:25, 34; 19:17

³ 3:12-26; 4:10; Romans 15:19; I Cor. 12:9-10; Galatians 3:5; Hebrews 2:4

⁴ 3:17-19; 13:27; Numbers 15:24-31; Matthew 21:42-46; 23:1-39; Luke 23:34

⁵ 2:4; 4:8; 6:10; 10:45-46; 13:2, 9; 18:25; 19:6; 20:23; 21:4, 11; II Samuel 23:2

⁶ 4:1-21; Matthew 14:5; 16:6, 16; 21:46; 22:23-34; 26:5; Mark 14:2; Luke 20:6

⁷ 4:3-4, 11; 3:13-15; Psalm 118:22; Matthew 21:42; Luke 23:11; I Peter 2:4, 7

⁸ 4:19-20; 5:29-32; 10:39-41; 22:15; Daniel 3:16-18; Heb. 2:3-4; I John 1:1-3

⁹ 4:23-31; 1:13-14; 2:1; 2:42; 5:33, 40-42; 16:16; 20:7; Hebrews 10:24-25

Why I Dance and Shout

See Acts 3:1-10

I had met a man who had been like me. He said he used to sit and beg for money everyday just like I always have. He said he had been healed by a man named Jesus and now he was walking around and learning a trade so he could support himself.

I think he was trying to cheer me up. Instead, I went into a depression, I'm afraid, because I did not even want to go to beg at the temple anymore. I wanted to find this Jesus. While my friends were carrying me to the Temple today, I asked about this man who had healed people. They said he was gone now.

I wanted to ask more about him, but you know how it is when people do a favor for you, they hurry and get it over with. They dropped me beside the beautiful gate of the Temple and left me for the day. I clashed with that spot. Here was an entryway of stunning carved brass pillars, and there sat me, slumped up crooked-like, in my old rags.

I had begged all morning and endured the noon sun when the afternoon crowd started arriving for prayer and to start the evening sacrifice. I looked at a couple men walking in to see if they might have money pouches on them. Nope. I called out to them anyway and then looked past them to see if anyone else was coming.

The one guy stopped and stared at me. I hate it when people do that. From the corner of my eye, I could see that compassionate look. I do not mind sympathy so much if people have money. But this guy was probably going to go through the list of questions: what happened? how long?

"Hey, look at us!" the man said.

I looked up at him. Maybe he did have some dough.

He said, "I do not have any silver or gold, but I have something better. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth—"

I recognized that name! Hope came alive in me.

"Stand up and walk!" he shouted.

Before I could respond, he grabbed me by the hand and pulled me up. Suddenly, I could feel my feet. I pulled them under me and pushed up. My legs unfolded for the first

time in my life. I looked down at my feet for minute and felt like I was floating. I had never been up that high before.

I let go of the man's hand and started walking. Then I started running. "Yes!" I shouted. I ran down the length of the court and jumped and skipped all the way back. "Praises to God!" I shouted. "Blessed is the name of Jesus!"

• • •

See Acts 5:40-42

After being with Peter the day the lame man was raised up, I figured we would get in the trouble for talking about Jesus. When they took us to jail, Pete said, "John, they could beat us for this."

I didn't imagine they would. The second time they arrested all of us apostles, I figured we would get out with no problem—and we did, thanks to God's angel. That's when things got nasty. They took us before the council and nearly screamed at us. The president of the council would not even mention the name of Jesus—he just told us to stop using "that name."

Then they tied each of us up and whipped us with leather. In my adult life I had never been so humiliated. They thrashed us like violent criminals. Some of us were crying. Some could hardly walk.

After my beating I thought I would die. Not only did the whip leave whelps and bruises, my skin broke open and began to bleed in places. I guess I was not as tough as I used to be back when we hauled fishing nets all night long for a living.

The mood was dismal as the twelve of us walked out of the punishment hall. People looked at us with disdain as we came out into the sunlight, knowing we were not to mention "that name" again.

Suddenly, even though I could hardly drag my left leg along, I began to laugh. A deep joy spurted up and I turned to my brothers and said, "Guys, we just got to suffer for Jesus' sake! We were honored by being dishonored with Him! Remember? He said to rejoice when persecuted."

As we passed the Beautiful Gate I began to jump, run, and shout as that lame man did. "I am a witness of Jesus!"

Stand Up for Jesus

What a dramatic moment for the young church to see the power of Jesus still alive among them. What a horrifying moment for the religious leaders who thought they had killed the miracle worker to see Him doing the same things right in their territory. Now He was multiplied into twelve men, not just one. What motivated Peter and John to go to the Temple on this day? See Acts 3:1.

How does this impact the amount of miracles a church will see?

How did the paralyzed man respond, in Acts 3:8?

Look at Isaiah 35:6. This is a part of a prophecy about how the Messiah would set the world in order. What part was fulfilled in Acts chapter 3?

In a spiritual sense, how was the second part of Isaiah 35:6 being fulfilled?

How did the crowd react to this miracle, in Acts 3:10?

Peter and John could have used this as a good promotional for a fundraiser (after all they were lacking silver and gold). Instead, what did Peter say when all the people came around to gawk at this curiosity, in Acts 3:11-12?

Red carpet. You buy it in a three-foot wide roll and roll it out into a long runway. You do not invite people to see your red carpet. You do not let just anyone step on your red carpet. You roll out a red carpet for a very important person. The carpet is not the feature but a beacon to let everyone know the significance of your honored guest.

Miracles, signs, and wonders are not the focus of the kingdom. They get the attention on the One who everyone needs to see. Too many believers try to get on the red carpet themselves and brag about their prayers, their fasting, their holiness, their hair, their faithfulness, their tithing, or their whatever-else. When we see a red carpet unfold before us as God works the impossible we should allow Him to walk it.

How did Peter make sure everyone got the right message from this miracle, in Acts 3:13?

Peter pointed out the people's guilt regarding Jesus. What did he say they did to Him, in 3:13-15?

Contrasting their rejection against the faith of the lame-man-made-whole and the disciples, Peter invited them to change their views of Jesus Christ. Rather than harshly insult them, how did Peter soften the blow in 3:17-18?

Regardless of who was to blame for Christ's death, however, what did Peter demand they do, in 3:19?

What do you learn about soul-winning from all this?

Stand against Apathy

“Don’t talk about that name!” the Sadducees told Peter. This political group was the ruling religious party. Their main opponents were the Pharisees. Both were hypocrites and slaves to their rules. The Pharisees however thought they were getting closer to God by making more rules. The Sadducees were keeping the old ways for tradition’s sake and for favor with the general public, but they also played the other side of the fence trying to stay friendly to Rome so they would not lose control.

These Sadducees did not want to lose favor with God’s people or with the heathen empire. How have you seen this kind of spirit among God’s people?

How can you avoid it in your own life?

The Sadducees probably got most offended at Jesus when he messed up their money-making scheme in the Temple. They did not care what He said or did as long as He did not mess up their game (and gain). Where do you see this spirit get in people today?

The Sadducees did not like the supernatural. They bitterly oppose the apostles’ message of the resurrection in Acts 4:2. Why do some people despise talk about miracles, signs, and wonders?

Locked up. That's what these cold-hearted unbelievers did to Peter and John. Like a kidnapper binding and gagging a victim, the Sadducee spirit of apathy shuts the mouth of those who have incriminating evidence. Apathetic spirits do not argue facts. They do not twist the truth. They simply smother your testimony in the rags of oppression.

The devil does not care what you have seen or what you know about God as long as you do not tell. It does not matter what you have learned and what you know about God's word. Who cares how great your faith is? As long as you do not talk, none of it matters.

Our society continually moves in this direction. They do not care what you believe as long as you do not mention your faith in the workplace, pray in school, or publicly display commands from the Bible. So-called Christian gatherings invite people with many different beliefs to come together but not talk about their differences. They just want us all to get along.

What technique does the spirit of apathy use, in Acts 4:17 and 4:21?

Have you submitted yourself to this spirit? Do you feel threatened by others' beliefs? If you withdraw from speaking the truth in the presence of others, you need to repent, too.

Make your response to apathy the same as the apostles in Acts 4:20. Write this verse as your own vow and declare it before the Lord right now!

When the angel got the apostles out of jail, he commanded them to "Go..." and what, in Acts 5:20?

Jesus, the Suffering Servant

Peter uses some unique phrases to describe our Lord. He calls Him the Servant (Son), Holy One, Just One, and the Originator (Prince of Life). Speaking to a people who knew the Scriptures, Peter connected his words with passages about the Messiah they already knew. He says, “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus” (Acts 3:13, *NKJV*). How does this statement link up with the prophecy in Isaiah 52:13?

What does Isaiah 52:14 say about this suffering Servant which was fulfilled in the life of Jesus Christ?

Peter tells them that this prophesied Holy One whom they killed has come back to startle the nations and shut the mouths of kings because they would see and hear His power for themselves (Isaiah 52:15). Although, Peter and the other apostles preached mightily about the salvation available in Christ, they may have wondered with the prophet, “Who has believed our report?” (53:1).

How does Isaiah 53:2-3 describe the way people denied Jesus and turned from Him at his beating and crucifixion?

What does Isaiah 53:4-6 say all this has to do with our sins and sickness?

Peter validates Isaiah's prediction of the suffering Servant's work when he ends his sermon saying, "To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities" (Acts 3:26, *NKJV*). Peter also mentions Jesus' appearance before Pilate. How does Isaiah 53:7 describe this event?

How does Isaiah 53:8-9 describe the Servant's death?

How does Isaiah 53:10-12 describe the resurrection, ascension and victory of the Servant?

After Peter and John rejoin the group of believers, as a whole they worship the Lord. They understood the prophecies about the Messiah and saw themselves as part of the big picture, not just people suffering for no reason.:

For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." (Acts 4:27-30, *NKJV*).

What role do you have in the song of the Servant, according to Isaiah 52:7?

Scripture-based Faith

Peter preached a powerful sermon because of his readiness to serve God. While the Spirit came on him for this occasion, the recorded portion of his preaching shows that he diligently studied the Word of God.

Peter got the idea to call Jesus the “Holy One” from the Scriptures. Look up this phrase in a concordance and jot down some of the scriptures you find about the “Holy One” in Isaiah. How do these connect to Jesus?

What does Psalm 16:10 say about Him?

Other passages refer to Jesus as the Just One (righteous, sinless). How can the use of this concept in I Peter 3:18 and I John 2:1 help you in soul winning?

Peter also calls Him the “Prince of life,” also meaning originator or author. How does Hebrews 2:10 link up with this idea?

Hebrews 5:9. How does this help you present Jesus better?

Knowledge. You can *want* to win souls, you can *pray* really hard, but you have to *know* the message. People who have been trained in the wrong way of thinking will have to be taught the truth. Find Christ in the Scriptures. You learn by studying, preparing, and doing (Hebrews 5:12-14).

In Acts 3:18, how do you know Peter had done his homework?

In Acts 3:22, what does Peter use from Deuteronomy 18:15-19 in his sermon?

In 3:23, what does he quote from Leviticus 23:29?

In 3:24, how do you know He has a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures?

In 3:25, what does he pull from Genesis 12:3 and why is it important?

Finally, in Acts 4:25-26, how do you know the whole group of believers, not just the preachers, were students of God's Word?

Attitude is Everything

Any believer can share the gospel. How we do this, however, makes a major impact on the hearer. Wimpy witnessing gets only wilting wannabes. Cruel condemnation creates only clashing commotion. Humble handling of the truth feeds hungry hearts (Acts 3:19, 23; 4:4).

When facing hostile resistance, one needs godly wisdom to not cause harm. Peter and John could preach freely to the amazed crowd. When the authorities came, however, they needed to change their approach just slightly.

A spokesperson for Jesus Christ must not be afraid to hurt other people with the truth. Pointing out to someone that he or she is guilty of putting Jesus on the cross will hurt. It is a good kind of hurt. In Acts 2:37, how were the people hurt and what did they do about it?

In Acts 5:33, the religious rulers felt the same sting. What was their response?

When you share the good news of Jesus, you must also share the bad news of humanity's sin. Otherwise, no one would see their need for Him and repent of their guilt. How people respond to this conviction of sin is their choice, you simply get them to acknowledge it.

While people will be hurt by our words of truth, we should take care not to harm them. The rulers of the Temple harmed the apostles by whipping them. Hurt people recover quickly as soon as they change their ways. Harmed people carry bruises and whelps for a long time. If your evangelistic methods harm people, you are not doing the work of Christ.

How do people harm others with the truth?

The toolbox. When a mechanic removes the bolts from an engine, he uses different tools depending on how old and difficult the particular make is. A regular wrench might turn some of the easier bolts. Other bolts may need power tools, leverage bars, or even heat to get them to turn.

Some hearts turn to Jesus easily. Others require heavier duty equipment. The 5,000 people mentioned in Acts 4:4 were soft hearts who quickly turned to the truth. The Sanhedrin, however, were tough to budge. Since they resisted the gospel, Peter opened the drawer with industrial strength tools. Since they would “not hear the Prophet” they were already marked out for destruction (Acts 3:23).

What strength was Peter drawing upon in Acts 4:8?

After being told to shut up, what did Peter and John answer in Acts 4:19-20?

When you have to resist those who resist God’s word, do so with a humble spirit. If you get belligerent like them, you have lost the battle. In holy honesty, what did the apostles tell their opponents in Acts 5:29?

After these vicious enemies beat them into silence and scared the living daylights out of them, what did the apostles do? Answer from Acts 5:42.

How will you be a better witness having learned from the apostles’ example?

Boldness Outlives Coldness

Bro. Andrew Urshan began reaching out to North East Chicago in the early 1900's and faced rejection from local authorities because they carried their meetings late into the night, waiting for each seeker to be filled with the Holy Spirit:

One particular night, when the seekers were tarrying the power of God fell upon us in great measure: and one brother and sister were prostrated under the power. A brother was praising God, with "stammering lips." Isa. 28:11. At about midnight, the door of the Mission was forced open, and in five minutes, the hall was packed with night street-walkers, policemen, and detectives. While putting their hands upon us to arrest us, the seeking brother came through fine, speaking in tongues, and Sister received him in jail.

Fifteen of us, representing four different nationalities, were arrested and kept in jail all night! We had a glorious opportunity in the early morning hours to preach and testify to hundreds, and the jail resounded with songs and praises! In the morning we were brought before the Magistrate, and we were to be [fined] two hundred dollars for every night should our meetings continue after ten o'clock from then on.¹

Although we may not face the same issues, we can learn the spirit of the pioneers. Bro. Howard Goss relates what church work was like at the beginning of the Pentecostal movement in America:

But we could never be sure we were not going to be injured. Some workers were attacked, some were beaten, some had bones broken, some were jailed, some were made to leave town, some were rotten-egged, and some were shot at. We were stoned, but least we were never "sawn asunder."

¹ Andrew Urshan, *The Life Story of Andrew Bar David Urshan*, Portland, OR: Apostolic, 1967, 131.

Church services 'were disturbed by rough-necks for many years. Tents, buildings, and sometimes residences were burned; drinking water was poisoned, and windows were broken. We were sometimes threatened by angry mobs or by raging individuals when some member of their family had been converted. Often, we had no protection; there were times when the police chose to close their eyes because we were the strangers, while the city paid them a salary....

Suffering was characteristic of aggressive Gospel work in Jesus' day, and it still is! The devil is just as much alive as he was in Jesus' time. But so is God, Who "makes a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." We bore it all because of our passion for the salvation of souls.

It was sometimes the case that a young worker was not satisfied, or felt that he had not won his spurs spiritually until he had had at least a few stones, tomatoes, or rotten oranges thrown at him or his tent (for Jesus' sake). We knew that if we couldn't make that much impression on Satan's territory, something was wrong. I have seen workers exultant over persecution, feeling they had arrived; counting it joy to serve under Him, and so share a bit of His reproach.

Few of us had dreams of world conquest. God was truly our captain. He alone knew what He was doing, and we were quite willing to have it so. That He was forging the great movement which now covers the earth, never entered most of our minds. We had no ambition for anything except to be more like Jesus and more useful to Him. All our attention and time were given to the job immediately at hand. There was never any time to rest, count spoils, nor even to appreciate fully what God had already done. We were all intent upon the joy of the moment.¹

¹ Howard Goss, *The Winds of God*, Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame, 1958, 148-50.

Bibliography

- Bruce, F. F. *The Book of Acts*. Revised. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Couch, Mal, ed. *A Bible Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999.
- Dunn, James. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1989.
- Goss, Howard. *The Winds of God*. Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame, 1958.
- Osborne, Grant, ed. *Acts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995.
- Urshan, Andrew. *The Life Story of Andrew Bar David Urshan*. Portland, OR: Apostolic, 1967.
- Williams, David. *Acts*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1985.
- Witherspoon, J. T. *Acts*, Hazelwood, MO: Pentecostal, 1972.

Life! *Journal*

Acts 4:18-20

And they called them,
and commanded them
not to speak at all

nor teach in the name of Jesus.

But Peter and John

answered and said unto them,

Whether it be right in the sight of God
to hearken unto you more than unto God,
judge ye.

For we cannot but speak the things
which we have seen and heard.

© 2011 Daniel J. Koren
15512 Kodiak Rd.,
Neosho, MO 64850

life2o.org