

CONNECTING

WITH AND
OUT ...

WITH-



Connect



SERVE



GROW

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Study 1

Acts 2

Week 4

Connect With the Spirit

READ

Love the LORD Your God with all your Mind

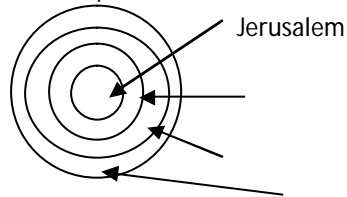


Big Idea

The early church was to wait until they received the Spirit before they began the command to be witnesses Acts 1.8. If our evangelism is to be effective it can only be as a consequence of the Spirit in us and with us.

Read Acts 1.1-11

1. What evangelism were the apostles called on to do v8? (fill in the circles)



2. What do they need to do this effectively?

Read Acts 2.1-41

3. What will the Holy Spirit do in them and what will the Spirit do in those they speak to?

Week 5

Week 6

Prayer Points

Week 1

4. Here is an interesting question. Some people say that speaking in tongues is a sign of the gift of the Spirit then why is there no mention of the three thousand who believed on the day of Pentecost 'speaking in tongues' despite the fact that Peter says in v38 that they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Are they right?

5. Who are the people who are there at the Feast of Pentecost Acts 2.5-13?

Week 2

Normally the gift of tongues is seen as a reversal of Babel (Gen 11) , where the Lord confused the languages of me and scattered the builders of the tower over the face of the earth. I'm not convinced, although I can see the reason for this idea. The major objection I have is that the people present are all Jews from the nations. How might Isaiah 11.1-11 be the better background to this than Babel?

6. When do you most identify with the apostles before or after Pentecost?

7. Do you believe that God is at work in the hearts of those you live with, work with and share a suburb with? How?

Week 3

8. This is a speculative question. What did the Lord make the apostles wait till they were baptised with the Spirit?

9. Do you believe the Spirit is working in you and through you in all the situations you find yourself in and are you alive to the opportunities that might be crafted by him for you to take advantage of?

MEDITATE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Heart



This week spend some time meditating on Romans 8.1516

Romans 8:15-16 ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

PRAY

Love the LORD Your God with all your Soul



Below write a prayer to God asking for a new refreshing of the Spirit.

LIVE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Strength



Identify and area where you need the Lord to work deeply in you..

MEDITATE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Heart



This week spend some time meditating on Ephesians 4:1-3

Ephesians 4:1-3 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

PRAY

Love the LORD Your God with all your Soul



Below write a prayer asking the Lord to show you your sinful ways and then enabling you to give them up.

LIVE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Strength



Look for opportunities to make it known you're a follower of Jesus.

Study 2

Acts 2

Connect With the Gospel

READ

Love the LORD Your God with all your Mind



Big Idea

Connecting with the Gospel means that we connect with what God has been doing in the world through Jesus and it is nothing less than the over- turning of Death and proclaiming a new way of living. If we are to be effective witnesses we need to understand how big the story is and how big the change is we are hoping for.

One way of relating the Old Testament to the New Testament is by talking in terms of promise and fulfilment. What is promised in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New, at least partially. What this means is that when we start reading the Bible at the New Testament we are, in one sense, only hearing half of the conversation, unless we listen well. When we do we get to see that the Gospel is an announcement that has been ages in preparation and its our great privilege to be in the 'fulfilled' part and not in the 'promise' part.

Read Acts 2.27-41

1. What is the content of the message that Peter preached to the Jerusalem crowd at Pentecost?

2. The Gospel is 'good news' but you have to hear bad news first before you understand the good news. What's the bad news Peter tells the people in Jerusalem?

3. How does Paul's integrity give him the ability to give the warning in 29-31?

4. What is the effect of someone who does not practice what they preach?

5. Are there behaviours that undermine your witness?

6. What are you going to do about them?

7. How does the Lord want to grow you to be a more effective witness for him?

Study 10

Acts 20.17-38

Connect With Integrity

READ

Love the LORD Your God with all your Mind



Big Idea

Paul in saying goodbye to the Ephesian elders reminds us that long term integrity has a supporting testimony to our gospeling. How's the shape and content of your witness at home at work and in the neighborhood?

We saw in the last study that how we live matter when it comes to our witness. Paul is a great example of this.

Read Acts 20.17-38

1. How did Paul maintain his integrity while he ministered in Ephesus?

2. Was Paul's ministry lacking in passion or relational care? Demonstrate.

3. How does the resurrection v24 read like Jesus has been acquitted at a higher court?

4. How does Peter relate the coming/giving of the Spirit to the resurrection and ascension of Jesus v33-35?

5. Does Peter sugar-coat the gospel v36? Why not v37?

6. What is the appropriate response to believing what Peter said?

7. What would they need to repent of?

The three thousand who believed formed a new community of God's people

MEDITATE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Heart

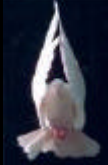


centred on Jesus their Messiah. This is a brand new start for Israel following her true God-given king.

This week spend some time meditating on Romans 1:16

PRAY

Love the LORD Your God with all your Soul



¹⁶ I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. **Romans 1:16**

Below write a Prayer thanking the Lord for the people who told and live the gospel for you.

LIVE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Strength



Risk a conversation this week and let people know next week how it went.

MEDITATE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Heart



This week spend some time meditating on Colossians 4.5

Colossians 4.5 ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

PRAY

Love the LORD Your God with all your Soul



Below write a prayer asking the Lord to help you see every opportunity.

LIVE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Strength



Do you know a gospel outline if someone asked you, "How do I become a Christian?"

Study 3

Acts 2.42-47

Connect With Community

READ

Love the LORD Your God with all your Mind



Big Idea

The Spirit and the Gospel creates a Community that is marked as belonging to Jesus. The early church's witness was based on how they lived together. We need as a community of Christ love God's Word, be personally hospitable to one another, love praising the Lord for what he has done for us in Jesus. This is a powerful witness.

The church family can either be a powerful witness for the truth of the Gospel of Jesus or a stumbling block to the Gospel.

Read Acts 2.42-47

1. How do we know that the witness of the early church was positive and effective in drawing in outsiders?

2. What is emphasised as noteworthy in the life of the early church?

They devoted themselves to:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

4. Who should you be praying a prayer like this for?

5. What does Paul mean when he encourages the readers to 'be wise in the way you act toward outsiders'?

6. What opportunities is he encouraging them to make the most of?

7. What would a salty conversation be like?

8. How does seeing yourself as a fellow-worker with God in changing the world shape your life?

Study 9

Acts 19.8-10; Col 4.2-6

Connect With Prayer

READ

Love the LORD Your God with all your Mind



Big Idea

While Paul was in Ephesus, missionaries were moving into the province of Asia planting churches. To one such church in Colossae he wrote a letter and gave instructions about prayerful, watchful evangelism.

We coming to the end of our series and we are coming to the point where we started—effective evangelism is the work of God. What is wonderful is that he uses our words and lives to bring others into the kingdom.

Colossians 4:2-6 ² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

1. What is the essence of all prayer?

2. Why do you think are we to combine watchfulness and thankfulness with prayer?

3. Why is Paul asking for prayer for and why?

3. What do you think it means to be devoted to the apostles' teaching?

4. How does our church family do this and how could it do it better?

5. What do you think it means to be devoted to the fellowship?

6. How does our church family do this and how could it do it better?

7. What do you think it means to be devoted to braking of bread?

8. How does our church family do this and how could it do it better?

9. What do you think it means to be devoted to prayer?

10. How does our church family do this and how could it do it better?

MEDITATE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Heart



This week spend some time meditating on Acts 2:42

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. **Acts 2:42**

PRAY

Love the LORD Your God with all your Soul



Below write a Prayer thanking the Lord for what is good in our church family.

LIVE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Strength



Use the card given out at church to find out what questions or objections your friends or family have about Christianity—this could be the start of good conversations.

MEDITATE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Heart



This week spend some time meditating on 1 Peter 3:15

1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

PRAY

Love the LORD Your God with all your Soul



Below write a prayer asking the Lord to give you opportunities to engage in long term conversations that lead to talking about Jesus.

LIVE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Strength



What can your group do to improve the quality of our church family life?

Study 4

Acts 5.12-42

Connect With Boldness

READ

Love the LORD Your God with all your Mind



Big Idea

The early witnesses faced opposition to the confronting message of the gospel . They were warned, beaten up, imprisoned and executed. Surprisingly, this didn't stop the witnessing it grew it. Why are we so easily shut down from telling people about Jesus? We need to be bold.

1. What was it in Acts 5.12-16 that would have sparked the arrest and punishment of the apostles?

2. What reason is given for the arrest in v17 and how do you make sense of it?

3. How does the arrest of the apostles by the high priest and their freeing by the angel from prison parallel how Jesus was treated?

4. What were the Sanhedrin's objections to the apostles' preaching v27-28 ?

4. What is your greatest fear when it comes to sharing your faith?

5. Do people know that you are a follower of Jesus (if you are)?

6. Does that lead to questions or conversations?

7. How could you use something in the news this week to begin a conversation that was deeper and more personal than just the weather of the cricket scores?

8. Are you interested in understanding other people's positions and interacting with them and asking them questions about what they believe?

Study 8

Acts 19.1-10

Connect With Conversation

READ

Love the LORD Your God with all your Mind



Big Idea

Paul, 'argued persuasively', he had 'discussions daily', a living witness just doesn't give the answers to questions people aren't asking, they engage the person in conversations and dialogue. What we need to be as Christians are people who love asking people what they think and why they think it.

The ministry of Jesus was a matter of conversations. Often people would come to Jesus and ask him a question and he would ask one back. Asking questions means that we have the opportunity to find out what lies behind the question and open up a deeper conversation.

1. Do you feel that if you talk to someone about your faith that you have to know all the answers?

2. Why?

3. How do you picture most evangelistic conversations in your head?

5. From the perspective of the apostles what choice were they confronted with v29-32?

6. What is Gamaliel suggesting to the Sanhedrin given that Jesus' followers are not scattered but are proclaiming the gospel v33-39?

7. What is extra ordinary about the apostles response to being flogged v41-42?

8. Realistically what is the worst thing that has ever happened to you for being a follower of Jesus?

9. What can you learn from the apostles'?

MEDITATE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Heart



This week spend some time meditating on Acts 5:29

²⁹ Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men! Acts 5:29

PRAY

Love the LORD Your God with all your Soul



Below write a Prayer asking the Lord to give you courage and boldness as you live for him.

LIVE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Strength



Are there changes you have to make in your life either because you've given away too much or because you haven't tried hard enough to be accommodating.

MEDITATE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Heart



This week spend some time meditating on Galatians 1:10

Galatians 1:10 ¹⁰ Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

PRAY

Love the LORD Your God with all your Soul



Below write a prayer asking the Lord to give you discernment in how to live in different contexts.

LIVE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Strength



Identify what you are most afraid of in telling people that you are a follower of Jesus.

Study 5

Acts 10

Connect Without Prejudice

READ

Love the LORD Your God with all your Mind



Big Idea

God is a God of grace and therefore surprises and one of the biggest surprises was that Cornelius didn't have to become a Jew to become part of God's people in Christ. He just had to trust the Lord Jesus. There is no one too wicked or too much of an outcast that we can't share Jesus with.

It is easy to see Israel as a nation where prejudice was deeply ingrained but this would be to misunderstand the real situation. The separation of Israel from the nations was so Israel wouldn't be influenced by them so that in time Israel could influence them and bring them to God.

The Big vision that the God of the Bible paints is saving a people to save the nations. There is no ingrained racism in the Bible anyone could become a Jew but only Jews made up the people of God—until Jesus turned up.

We know from the beginning of Acts Jesus has set the agenda; Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth, but we are not told on what basis the nations will be coming in. The assumption appears to be that the nations would come in by becoming Jews; circumcision and adopting the law as a way of life, so it appears until this striking event of God's making.

This is a play with three acts.

Act 1 Cornelius' House in Caesarea

1. How is Cornelius described?

2. Where does Cornelius and his family fit in the, **Acts 1:8** "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."?

3. What reasons does Paul give to back up this right?

4. What does he not make use of this right to be paid?

Read 1 Cor 9.19-23

5. What would it have meant for Paul to become like
One under the law

One not having the law

One who is weak?

Paul managed to analyse a cultural context in such a way that he was able to be flexible on his own cultural background but also be able to be inflexible on those things that would undermine the gospel or his ministry.

Being a Christian isn't always a matter of being nice. There comes points of decision in different contexts that determine whether we will be a consistent follower of Jesus or we are prepared to go along with anything.

6. Have you drawn any lines that you will not cross over for the sake of your soul and the witness of the gospel?

Study 7

Acts 18; 1 Cor 9

Connect Without Cultural Barriers

READ

Love the LORD Your God with all your Mind



Big Idea

Paul, the commensurate missionary, was always culturally relevant so that the gospel would be clearly heard. He didn't remove the Gospel's stumbling block – he removed cultural stumbling blocks. We need to be aware of what our own cultural baggage might be and make sure that we adjust our style (not content) so as to be sensitive to our listener's situation.

Corinth was one of the greatest cities in the ancient world due to its strategic geography. It was cosmopolitan and proud of its accomplishments. It was a city of contrasts, rich and poor, powerful and weak, Jew and Gentile. It was a city that had a clear idea about who was a good speaker and who wasn't, and how a speaker was expected to behave. Speakers would hire themselves out and speak at their hosts dinner parties. In this situation Paul makes two ministry decisions and these are outlined for us in 1 Cor 9. Firstly, he would offer the gospel free of charge, which meant that he would work with his hands—considered a shameful act by those who were the 'nobility' and accommodate himself to different groups culturally.

1. Have you ever had an experience when you realised you were on the outside and whatever was happening at the time didn't seem all that relevant to you?

Read 1 Cor 9.1-18

2. Did Paul have a right to be paid for preaching the gospel?

3. In effect we are crossing a very big boundary, what special experience should we expect to see when a boundary is crossed that shows God accepts Gentiles in the same way he accepts Jews?

Act 2 Peter at Joppa

4. How does the vision the Lord gives to Peter both match his physical need and Cornelius' spiritual status?

Peter is hungry

Cornelius is unclean

5. Why do you think Peter needs to see this vision three times and does it remind you of other occasions where three is significant for Peter?

Act 3 Peter at Cornelius' house in Caesarea

6. How does v28 show that Peter had learned half of the lesson of the vision?

7. What does Peter tell the family of Cornelius?

8. What happens as a result of Peter's sermon and what were the implications as far as Peter was concerned Acts 11.17?

9. How can we be racist or prejudiced?

You do realise that before Jesus you would probably been excluded from God's People as a Gentile.

MEDITATE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Heart



This week spend some time meditating on Galatians 3:28

Galatians 3:28 ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

PRAY

Love the LORD Your God with all your Soul



Below write a prayer thanking Jesus for opening up the Kingdom of God to you.

LIVE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Strength



Have a few walks around your neighbourhood—what do you notice about the lives of people there?

MEDITATE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Heart



This week spend some time meditating on 1 Corinthians 9:22

1 Corinthians 9:22 I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

PRAY

Love the LORD Your God with all your Soul



Below write a prayer thanking the Lord for becoming a man to show us God face to face.

LIVE

Love the LORD Your God with all your Strength



Are you harbouring prejudice in your life?

Study 6

Acts 17.16-33

Connect With Culture

READ

Love the LORD Your God with all your Mind



Big Idea

Paul in Athens shows us how much work Paul did to connect with the people he spoke to. In Athens he surveyed the area, analysed the culture and then spoke to the Athenians in a way that they would understand what they were accepting or rejecting. Paul Shows us that we need to connect with our culture, understand it, if we are to speak well to it.

Paul was a master missionary—not only because he travelled and preached in many places but also because he thought about how he would preach the gospel in different places. He never made the truth relevant but he did show how the truth was relevant and no place more so than in Athens.

1. How did Paul know that Athens was full of idols?
2. What was Paul's first response to the situation in Athens?
3. What does this tell you about the way that Paul approached his ministry?

The Areopagus was the council given the task of protecting Athens from unhelpful ideas.

4. When you look at Paul's speech to the council how does he show that he has tried to be contextualise his proclamation?

5. How does Paul show that he has not compromised the truth?

6. What Biblical truths does Paul slip in to his talk with the council members?

7. At what point did he lose his audience?

The Resurrection was a stupid concept in the ancient world and no where more so than in Athens—nothing new ever happened in the world.

8. What different cultural contexts do you inhabit?

9. If you behaved as a missionary, what might you do to prepare yourself for showing that the gospel was relevant in one of those situations?