



THE BOOK OF
ACTS



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

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TALK IT OVER

FROM EMPTY TO EMPOWERED

ICEBREAKER

Imagine having limitless energy for **one part** of your life—what area of your life would you apply it to? (Examples: more patience with your kids, the courage to face difficulties, the strength to break a habit, etc.)

INTRODUCTION

We've all had moments when we felt stuck. Maybe it was a habit you couldn't break, a fear you couldn't shake, or a part of your life that just felt empty. Willpower can only take us so far. What we really need is God's Spirit power. In Acts 2:1-4, the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost and filled ordinary people with extraordinary power. That same Spirit is available today to transform us, and use us to impact the world around us.

READ | Power to Change My Heart

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

— Acts 2:1–4 (NIV)

Pentecost is celebrated fifty days after Easter, marking the Holy Spirit's descent on Jesus' followers and the birth of the Church. It symbolizes the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit beginning the Church's mission to the world.

The Holy Spirit is not just a force, but God Himself living inside of us. On Pentecost, He took fearful, ordinary people and made them bold witnesses. Just weeks before, Peter denied Jesus three times. But after being filled with the Spirit, Peter stood up and boldly preached to thousands. That's what the Spirit gives us: the power to change from the inside out.

Where in your life do you most need God's Spirit to give you courage or strength?

(Examples: overcoming fear of failure, speaking up about your faith, inviting others to church, having a difficult but necessary conversation, etc.)

READ | Power to Change My Habits

“When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’ Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off.’ ... They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” — Acts 2:37–39, 42 (NIV)

God’s power isn’t limited to a single moment—it’s about a new way of life. The early believers devoted themselves daily to God’s Word, to prayer, to community, and to worship. If you want to live empowered, you have to make room for Him every day.

What’s one daily habit you could start—or restart—that would help you stay in tune with God’s Spirit? (Examples: doing daily devotions, listening to more worship music, praying more consistently, etc.)

READ | Power to Change My World

“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day... And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” ... “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...” — Acts 2:41, 47; Acts 1:8 (NIV)

The Holy Spirit changes us so we can impact *others*. At Pentecost, thousands were saved in one day, and more were added daily. God wants to use your life to encourage someone, to invite someone, to help someone take a step toward Him.

Who is one person you can encourage, invite, or bless this week as a way of letting the Spirit work through you?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

- This week, don’t settle for empty living. Each day, ask the Holy Spirit to fill and guide you. Make room by repenting, receiving, and remaining in Him.
- The next page has scriptures for daily devotions. Consider doing these daily devotions and holding each other accountable to writing down what God is speaking to you.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Father God, thank You for giving us the gift of Your Holy Spirit. Fill us again with Your power. Change our hearts, reshape our habits, and use us to change the world around us. Help us to make room for You every day. In Jesus’ name, amen.

MAKE TIME TO BE IN GOD'S WORD

Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, and share what God is teaching you on a personal level. One helpful method is using the “S.O.A.P.” approach to engage with each scripture:

S - Scripture

O - Observation

A - Application

P - Prayer

DAILY DEVOTION SCRIPTURES

Day 1: 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 (NIV)**

Day 2: When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

— **Acts 2:1–4 (NIV)**

Day 3: Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.”

— **Acts 2:14 (NIV)**

Day 4: Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

— **Acts 2:38–39 (NIV)**

Day 5: They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

— **Acts 2:42–47 (NIV)**

TALK IT OVER

BOLD FAITH IN A BACKLASH WORLD

ICEBREAKER

What's a time you spoke up when it was hard—or stayed silent and wished later you had spoken? (Examples: speaking up for someone being treated unfairly, telling a friend the truth, saying nothing and regretting it later)

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes the hardest time to speak is when it matters most. In Acts 3-4, Peter and John faced a crowd that once terrified them. Instead of hiding, they **stand up, speak up, and point to Jesus**. What changed? They were transformed by the **power of the Holy Spirit**. When you've been with Jesus, you don't fear the crowd.

READ | Faith to Uplift

“Peter said, ‘Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.’”
— Acts 3:6 (NIV)

When Peter instructed the crippled man to walk, this miracle didn't happen during a church service, but on their way to the temple. God often moves during the in-between moments when we're just living our everyday life.

That's why it's so important to live with a heart that's ready and available, not just on Sundays, but in the middle of errands, commutes, or conversations. When we're distracted or focused on ourselves, we can miss the moments the Spirit wants to use.

How can you prepare your heart so God can use your “in-between” moments?

(Examples: filling up with God's Spirit by attending church/small group weekly, or playing worship music in your car/office, etc.)

READ | Faith to Credit God

“Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we made this man walk?”
— Acts 3:12 (NIV)

In ancient Jewish culture, many believed only prophets or priests could perform miracles. But here, *two fishermen* are doing it in Jesus' name. That was scandalous—and **powerful**. Peter doesn't take credit, but rather points people to Jesus. Let your spotlight become *His* spotlight.

Have you ever shared with others about the miracles or goodness of God, even when you weren't sure how it would be received? If so, share an example. When something good happens in life, how can you let others know it was God helping you? (Example: Sharing how prayer lead you to a unique solution to a problem)

READ | Faith to Be Courageous

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said... 'It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth... this man stands before you healed.' ... When they saw the courage... they were astonished and took note that these men had been with Jesus."

— Acts 4:8, 10, 13 (NIV)

The Sanhedrin (Jewish high council) had the power to imprison, beat, or pressure the disciples. This is the same court that condemned Jesus and pressured Pilate to have Him crucified. But Jesus' disciples stood boldly before them. What made the difference? **They had been with Jesus.** Spending time with Jesus changes everything—it turns cowards courageous.

What helps you personally "be with Jesus," and how does it affect your confidence? (Examples: worship music, prayer walks, reading Scripture, etc.)

READ | Faith to Be Obedient

"We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard."

— Acts 4:20 (NLT)

In ancient Rome, speaking out, especially about faith, could bring rejection or even persecution. Peter and John knew the risks, but they spoke anyway. They weren't trying to offend—they were simply obeying God.

Today, you may not face jail time, but you might face criticism, awkwardness, or being misunderstood. In those moments, lean on God's strength, not your own. **Don't trade obedience for acceptance.** One day, we'll all stand before Jesus, and in that moment, His approval will matter far more than anyone else's opinion. Let's live now in a way we won't regret later.

Have you ever been nervous to talk about Jesus? What helped you, or what could help you? (Examples: asking your mentor or your small group to pray for you, praying for courage and wisdom, etc.)

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

- Spend time with Jesus, and share about Him with others this week.
- Ask God for the courage to be bold and get water baptized, if you haven't yet.
- Write down someone God has put on your heart and pray for them daily.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for giving us courage through Your Spirit. Sometimes we stay silent when we should speak, but we don't want to live in fear. Please fill us again with boldness. Please use our words, our lives, and even our weaknesses to shine Your light to the person You want us to reach. In Jesus' name, amen.

DAILY DEVOTION SCRIPTURES

Day 1: For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.
— **2 Timothy 1:7 (NIV)**

Day 2: When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.
— **Luke 12:11–12 (NIV)**

Day 3: After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.
— **Acts 4:31 (NIV)**

Day 4: Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel... — **Ephesians 6:19–20 (NIV)**

Day 5: Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.
— **Joshua 1:9 (NIV)**

ICEBREAKER

Is there a worship song that's encouraged you in a hard season? Or a song that always lifts your spirits? Share **one song** that has helped you through tough times.

INTRODUCTION

We all have those "midnight moments" when life feels dark, confusing, or hopeless. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas were beaten, chained, and thrown into prison. Instead of giving up, they prayed and sang hymns to God at midnight. Their story reminds us that God often does His best work in the darkest hours. When we face our own "midnights," we can trust Him to guide us, strengthen us, and even use our struggles to help others find freedom.

READ | Midnight DETOURS: *God leads differently in different seasons*

"Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia... When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to." — Acts 16:6–7 (NIV)

Paul had a plan, but God had a different one. The Holy Spirit closed the door and redirected Paul to Macedonia instead. Closed doors can feel frustrating, but sometimes rejection is God's redirection. He sees what we cannot, and protects us from what we don't know.

Where have you experienced a closed door that later turned out to be God's protection or redirection? (Examples: not getting a desired job but finding a new opportunity; having a relationship fail only to discover God's best for you later; etc.)

READ | Midnight PRAISE: *Praise before the breakthrough*

"About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them." — Acts 16:25 (NIV)

Instead of despairing, Paul and Silas chose to worship at midnight, and sang while the chains were still on. Worship shifts our focus, taking our eyes off the problem and putting them on God's power, grace, and love. When you choose to praise in the dark, it changes your perspective, strengthens your faith, and opens the door for God to move. Worship isn't just a song, but a weapon of spiritual warfare.

What does it look like for you to praise God “at midnight?” How might worship change your outlook before anything changes in your circumstances?

READ | Midnight IMPACT: *Your chains can free someone else*

“Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, ‘Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!’ The jailer... fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.’ Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house... then immediately he and all his household were baptized...”

— Acts 16:26–34 (NIV)

God miraculously freed Paul and Silas from the prison that night, but they still chose to stay, and their response led to the jailer and his entire family coming to Christ. Their faith in the darkest moments brought freedom to others. The same is true for us—people are watching how we handle hardship. Your midnight may become someone else’s morning. God never wastes your struggles, but can use them to bring hope to others who are looking for answers.

How could your faith in a "midnight moment" help someone else take a step toward Jesus? (Example: sharing with friends or family how Jesus has brought you through some of your darkest moments, etc.)

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

- This week, think of one area of your life that feels like "midnight." Instead of only asking God to remove it, ask Him to **use it**, and reveal what He’s trying to teach you and change in you. Choose to worship in the middle of it, believing He can bring good even from the dark.
- If you are going through a difficult season, ask your Small Group to pray for you.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Father God, thank You that You never waste our "midnights." Help us to trust Your leading when doors close, to worship You even when the chains are still on, and to remember that You can use our struggles to bring freedom to others. In Jesus’ name, amen.

DAILY DEVOTION SCRIPTURES

Day 1: Next Paul and Silas traveled through the area of Phrygia and Galatia, because the Holy Spirit had prevented them from preaching the word in the province of Asia at that time.

— **Acts 16:6 (NLT)**

Day 2: That night Paul had a vision: A man from Macedonia in northern Greece was standing there, pleading with him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us!” So we decided to leave for Macedonia at once, having concluded that God was calling us to preach the Good News there.

— **Acts 16:9–10 (NLT)**

Day 3: Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening.

— **Acts 16:25 (NLT)**

Day 4: Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!

— **Acts 16:26 (NLT)**

Day 5: He brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God.

— **Acts 16:34 (NLT)**

TALK IT OVER

UNLIKELY PEOPLE. UNSTOPPABLE GRACE.

ICEBREAKER

Who's someone that surprised you by changing for the better? (Examples: a wild classmate who turned their life around, a sibling who grew and matured, or even yourself!)

INTRODUCTION

God loves writing a good plot twist. In Acts 9, Saul (later Paul), a man who hunted down Christians, becomes one of the greatest voices for Jesus. In Acts 10, a Roman soldier—an outsider to the Jewish faith—is handpicked by God to receive and later share the gospel. Two unexpected people. One unstoppable God. No one is too far gone or too ordinary for God to use.

READ | Called, Not Cancelled

“As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him... ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’” — Acts 9:3–4 (NIV)

Saul wasn't just a skeptic, but a threat to the early church. He was actively persecuting Christians. But Jesus didn't cancel him; He called him. Saul became Paul, one of the primary writers of the New Testament and a bold messenger of the Gospel. Since God redeems brokenness, we should reflect His heart by seeing people not as they are, but as they can be in Him.

Why do you think God often uses the most unlikely people to do the most incredible things? (Examples: it highlights God's redeeming power, not their qualifications; it makes others take notice, etc.)

READ | Repurposed for God's Mission

“This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles...” — Acts 9:15 (NIV)

When the Lord instructed Ananias to find Saul and heal him, he hesitated. Saul had a reputation, and Ananias feared for his life. But through his obedience, God was able to give Saul not only a second chance, but a **new mission** that changed the church forever. God doesn't just erase your past, but repurposes it.

Have you ever seen God use a painful part of your story for good? Or someone else's? (Example: a recovering addict helping others get clean; a broken relationship leading someone to deeper faith; etc.)

READ | Grace for Every Nation

“God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right.”
— Acts 10:34–35 (NIV)

In Acts 10, we hear about Cornelius, who was a Roman soldier. He was seen as an outsider, a Gentile. Yet God gave him a vision. In Jewish culture at the time, even entering a Gentile's home was frowned upon. Peter had to overcome his own bias to see that the gospel was never held back because of cultural, racial, or societal barriers. If God's love has no borders, neither should ours.

These radical stories prove that there is no one beyond God's reach. Who have you been praying for, but quietly given up on? Take a moment to reflect, or write their name down. God hasn't given up on them—maybe He's just getting started.

Is there a type of person or group you've found it hard to believe God could reach? Why do you think that is? (Examples: a hostile atheist, someone who's hurt you, a celebrity who seems too far gone, etc.)

WHAT WILL YOU DO

- Ask God to renew your hope for the person you wrote off.
- Pray bold prayers for their salvation—and yours, if needed.
- **As a group, discuss if you will continue meeting together for the next series!**

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Jesus, thank You that no one is too far gone. Thank You for grace that reaches us, rewires us, and gives us new purpose. We pray for those we've written off and ask You to write a new story in their lives. Use us to carry Your hope to everyone, everywhere. In Your name, amen.

DAILY DEVOTION SCRIPTURES

Day 1: As [Saul] neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

— **Acts 9:3–6 (NIV)**

Day 2: God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears Him and does what is right.

— **Acts 10:34–35 (NIV)**

Day 3: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

— **2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)**

Day 4: There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

— **Galatians 3:28 (NIV)**

Day 5: But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

— **1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)**



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