

The Acts of the Non-Apostles

by Nancy Kuhlman

Leader's Guide

Lesson 3 – The Means God Provided

Aim: to help class participants understand that the power needed to save souls is in God's Word and that this powerful resource of the Word has been entrusted to us.

Reviewing lessons 1 and 2:

Who has been empowered and instructed by God to carry out His work. (see Acts 2:4, 4:31)

Disciples (believers) then and now - the Church

Mention again the alternate title of the book,—“The Acts of the Holy Spirit”

What is the work that God wants us - “the Church” - to do? (Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15)

Spread the Gospel that souls might be saved

How does our congregation undertake this work? How does our church help each member recognize their part in the mission?

Encourage specific examples and make the connection between the activity and how it relates to the mission of the church to spread the Gospel. (i.e. How does serving on altar guild relate to sharing the Gospel? How about serving coffee and donuts after church?)

Read Isaiah 55:11

1. What resource has God provided for us to carry out His mission?

His Word

Read John 1:1-18

2. What facts do we learn about the Word from verses 1-5 and 10-18?

Word present and active in creation, part of the Godhead. It is personified. It is life that shines in the darkness. Incarnation of the Word not recognized by world. His own people did not receive Him. Granted sonship to those who received Him. The WORD is Jesus!

3. According to this passage, how does a person come to know God?

By hearing and receiving the witness (the facts about Him) from the mouth of another (John the Baptist). Jesus makes known the Father to those who receive Him.



Read Acts 1:8; Acts 8:1b; Acts 13:1; 2 Corinthians 4:6-7

4. To whom has this powerful resource been entrusted?

Believers/Church. Notice what has occurred in a very short period of time. The Book of Acts spans about 30 years.

It wasn't the "big names" who were responsible for the phenomenal growth of the church—it was the Holy Spirit, who was working through non-Apostles as well, "everyday" believers like you and me. They carried the message of Christ to the world. In the context of John 1:1-18, sharing the Gospel is quite literally carrying Christ Himself to the world! Awesome, isn't it? You have His Holy Spirit in you to empower and enable you to speak the Living Word to people who will be lost without it.

Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17

5. Describe what God's Word has the power to do.

The word is living and it has power. Look what it can do: it leads to salvation, it teaches, reproves, corrects, and trains us in righteousness. It makes us adequate for whatever work we are given to do. More passages about the power of the Word include Hebrews 4:12, Matthew 24:35, Jeremiah 23:29, Psalm 119:105.

6. How does the Word "equip" us?

Through the Word the Holy Spirit acts. He has given us gifts and He empowers us to use them to build up the body of Christ through strengthening the faith of each other and by bringing people into the body through the power of the Gospel.

The Word of God has a life-changing impact on people. The power is in the Word as it is passed on by people. We are the specifically designed "transport and delivery containers" for God's Word! That's God's wonderful, mysterious - and totally illogical by human standards - plan! God blesses us by asking us to do this for Him.

7. Think about an experience when you did something you know the Word equipped you to do. If you are willing, share this with the group.

The leader can model the type of response desired by sharing an experience of his/her own. This will encourage the group members to share also.

Read Acts 8:1-3, 4

8. Contrast how human assessment would view this situation (vv. 1-3) with how God viewed it (v. 4). *Human logic would say that disbanding the group would dilute their ability to influence others. God used that very persecution and scattering of the believers—remember they are the "transport containers"—to accomplish exactly what He wanted and what He said: "You will be My witnesses."*

What life lessons does this suggest to you?

Look at the obstacles—the things that seem to interfere when you want to do God's will—from a different perspective. What would happen if we had the mindset that our circumstances, no matter what they are, do not change the purpose God has for our lives, that those circumstances do not excuse me from doing what He



asks? If we had that mindset, I think we would look at what God can do through us, not what we can't do because of our situation! Satan wants us to see obstacles. God wants us to see opportunities.

Read Romans 10:8-17

9. What is the process God has laid out for reaching people with His message of salvation?
Hearing the proclaiming of the Gospel, believing in its truth about Jesus, confessing aloud that belief.

What steps are involved, according to this passage?

Sending - Speaking - Hearing - Believing - Confessing. God sends. Disciples speak the Living and Life-giving Word. Other people hear. The Holy Spirit works faith in their hearts and empowers them to confess that faith.

What is the "bottom line" in verses 14-15?

Someone has to go and proclaim the Gospel.

Read Acts 12:21-24; 13:48-49; 14:21; 16:30-34

10. What do these passages clearly demonstrate about God's Word?
It has POWER.
11. How does seeing the power of the Holy Spirit in the resource of God's Word and in the lives of the non-Apostles in the early church encourage you to "speak the word boldly"?
Encourage participants to verbally share and challenge them to seek an opportunity (maybe when they only see an "obstacle") to speak God's Word to someone this week.

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