



STUDY GUIDES

Week 1

Monday - Read Acts 2:1-13

Jesus' death happened during the Passover festival. Fifty days later, another big event happened in Jerusalem, just like the Passover. This festival was called Pentecost, which means "the fiftieth." It is remembered when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. What's so cool about this is that God gave the Holy Spirit on the same day as giving the law to Moses. Does this mean a new time for the Jews? What does it mean for them? And what does it mean for us today?

Tuesday - Read Acts 2:14-23

Listen up, folks in Jerusalem! Peter's here, and he's got some serious words to say about the Pentecost. Can you believe it? Many of the same people who were part of the plot to kill Jesus were there. And guess what? Peter's the same guy who bolted when he saw what happened to Jesus after he was arrested. So, what's got Peter so brave now, less than 50 days after running away?

Wednesday - Read Acts 2:24-32

In yesterday's reading, we saw Peter speaking up to the crowd that helped put Jesus to death. He started accusing them of the murder, but then, with a huge surprise, he tells them that God raised Jesus from the dead. Imagine you're in the crowd. What would you be thinking? At first, you might have thought Peter was crazy. Then he mentions that we're all witnesses, and he points to over 100 people standing right there. What would they have thought? Now, let's read **Acts 2:36-38**.

The crowd, realizing what they had done, asked Peter, "What should we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized." *Repent means to change your mind or turn away from something.* Peter is telling them to change their mind about who Jesus was and is. Then, be baptized – publicly say that you repented and believe Jesus is your Lord and Savior. Imagine the guilt and joy in the crowd's hearts. All they had to do was repent and be baptized to be forgiven. Is there something you need to change your mind about today? Is there something you need to turn away from? Does your life publicly proclaim that Jesus is your Lord?

Thursday - Read Acts 3:13-16

Peter spoke out against those who killed Jesus again. This time, he stood on the temple stairs, where the wicked men who pursued Jesus's death were. What did Peter say? He said you killed him, but God raised him. Peter's message wasn't about what Jesus said. It was about the resurrection of Jesus. That was the foundation of Peter's faith, the resurrection. What's the foundation of your faith?

Friday - Read Acts 4:1-14

Peter was chatting with folks outside the temple steps when suddenly, everyone inside noticed him. With a bold move, he spoke up against the Jewish leaders, the very men who had Jesus arrested, killed, and kept his tomb guarded. But they couldn't deny the power that had been given to Peter and John right then. They saw a man standing there with Peter, and they all knew he had been lame for years. Then Peter said that this man's healing came from the power of Jesus that they had been given. Can you imagine what must have been going through their minds? They couldn't deny the healing. They couldn't deny the courage. They couldn't deny that they were ordinary men who had been with Jesus. What were they thinking? What are you thinking? What could have happened besides the resurrection to give Peter and John the courage and power to do what they were doing?

Week 2**Sunday - Read John 3:16**

In this passage, we witness the profound love of God. It can be tough to grasp this verse at first glance. How can a loving God accept the world we live in, filled with people like us who can be so unloving? Do you question the existence of God? Or do you doubt that God could love you this much? What makes you doubt?

Monday - Read Luke 12:51-53, Acts 7:54-8:3

Jesus said He came to bring division and something new to the world. This new view of God and life clashed with the long-held beliefs and structures within the Jewish community, whose identity was based on the Jewish scriptures, laws, and commandments. This tension led to separation and persecution of Jesus' followers by both the Jews and the Romans. How have you grappled with the differences between what the Old Testament and the New Testament say? Do you feel tension when you read both? Do you find contradictions? Do you ever have to do mental gymnastics to make them both say the same thing?

Tuesday - Read Acts 9:1-2

Saul, later known as Paul, kept on his journey to end, *The Way* (later known as Christianity). He was determined to do what he thought was God's will, but guess what? It turned out to be going against God! Have you ever had a moment where you thought you were defending God or doing God's will, but in reality, you were going against it? Did that change how you see things about God? Is there anything you're brave enough to admit today that might be going against God's will? If so, let that bring you to a place of humility and not shame.

Wednesday - Read Acts 15:3-5

Have you noticed the Pharisees, who were the ones who wanted Jesus killed, are now at the church council listening to Paul and Peter's speeches? It's crazy how they've changed their minds! But here's the thing, even though they were Pharisees, they still wanted these gentile men who became followers of Jesus to be circumcised, even though they weren't raised Jewish. They believed in Jesus, but they hadn't

quite figured out what Jesus's grace was all about. Have you ever experienced that kind of grace and new life in Jesus? Have you ever struggled with moving forward, going back to old ways of thinking and acting? Have you ever judged others because they don't follow Jesus in the same ways you do? If you've answered yes to any of those questions, I want you to write it all out and give it to God. He'll work through it with you.

Thursday - Read Acts 15:6-11

Peter is all about defending the gentile Christians because he's seen how the Holy Spirit has changed them. He also knows they shouldn't try to undo what God has done by putting all the Jewish laws on them. (They can't even follow them themselves!) So, how does this apply to you and your journey with Jesus? Have you ever seen the Holy Spirit work differently in someone else than it works in you? And what burdens have you put on yourself or others because you're trying to follow Jesus?

Friday - Read Acts 15:12-21

Have you ever heard of James, the brother of Jesus? Well, there are some words from James that have changed everything, not just for the people of that time, but for Christians forever...even today! Take a moment to think about how this decision has affected your ability to be a Christian today. How does it change your perspective on your connection to the Old Testament? And what about the New Testament? Take a few minutes to sit quietly and think about what this means for you and for everyone else.

Saturday - Read Acts 15:22-35

In the book of Acts, there was a council that brought joy to all the gentile followers of Jesus. They realized that their salvation wasn't about a surgical procedure or following strict laws. It was all thanks to the grace of God, through His Son Jesus Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. So, let's celebrate this incredible gift that's been given to us today! Treat yourself to a yummy cupcake, take a stroll, or do something you love that brings you to a celebration of this amazing love that God has for you. You're loved, and you're part of something bigger than yourself. Something that's changing the world and the entire universe. God is bigger than you could ever imagine!

Week 3

Monday - Read Acts 13:44-52

So, here's the thing: the Jewish people started to get a bit jealous and hostile towards Paul and Barnabas. But guess what? They turned their backs on them and welcomed the gentiles with open arms! They offered them forgiveness of sins and eternal life through Jesus. And the gentiles were like, "Yes, please!" The good news of Christ spread like wildfire throughout the region, reaching all the gentiles. Now, I'm curious, what ways do we, as humans, get in the way of this simple, wonderful message?

Tuesday - Read Acts 15:1-2

As Gentiles embraced Christianity and followed Jesus, tensions and resistance arose from Jewish Christians. Some Jewish Christians argued that the gentile Christians had misunderstood the message. They believed that salvation wasn't solely based on Jesus' grace but also required surgery, laws, and *then* Jesus' grace. Could you explain how you've come to believe that you can earn forgiveness through other means besides Jesus? Also, which laws are you following, hoping they'll favor you with God, rather than relying on Jesus' grace?

Wednesday - Read Acts 9:3-19

Jesus met Paul right where he was, both physically and spiritually. It wasn't through the Bible or the teachings of the disciples that Paul's mind changed. It was the resurrected Jesus who changed Paul's mind. Paul's blindness, which he experienced after his encounter with Jesus, finally helped him see the truth. Sometimes, when we're at our lowest point, we find Jesus. Jesus went through suffering, and it's in suffering that many eventually find Him. How can you find Jesus in your suffering? Just know that if Jesus met Paul (who was persecuting his followers) in his suffering, then he will meet you in yours. Jesus didn't immediately change Paul's circumstances, but he changed his perspective. Will you let Him change your perspective?

Thursday - Read Acts 10:9-16

Here's a story about God doing something new with Peter. Back then, there were so many foods that were considered unclean according to Jewish law and the scriptures. But the unclean stigma wasn't just attached to foods; it was also placed on people and places. For example, it was against the law for Jews to enter the house of a gentile. In these verses, we see that God calls Peter to see things differently, to see them as clean. This would have been ten years after the resurrection when God spoke to Peter in a dream. So, I'm curious, have you ever had a moment where God spoke to you outside of scripture? Was it through people? In a dream? Did you feel a nudge? Or was it in silence? Sometimes, it's hard to know if it's God in those moments, which is why sometimes God might have to do it three times, like He did for Peter.

Friday - Read Acts 10:1-8 17-23

Peter has a dream that God gave him, and he needs to follow it. But he needs wisdom, courage, and trust to do it. What do you think made Peter so quick to change his mind about how to treat Gentiles? What new thing is God calling you to do? What are the next steps for you in following Jesus? Tell someone about this new thing and ask them to encourage you.

Saturday - Read Acts 10:23-48

In his dream, Peter felt God was doing something new for the gentiles, and he was chosen to be a part of this vision. He couldn't say God was just for the Jewish people anymore because he saw God being revealed to non-Jewish people. Peter started to see how much bigger God was than he thought, and how God opened the door for everyone, regardless of their religion. When did you realize that God's ways and views are bigger than you thought? Show how big your God is by doing 5 acts of kindness to people today. And when you do, watch as Peter did, and see how big God really is!