**ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**

**Lesson 5: The Church Is Built through Blocking & Tackling**

***The most powerful thing we can do to build the church is the ordinary, common work of discipleship and evangelism.***



**To know that staying faithful to our calling is the most powerful way we can build God’s church.**

***Heart Change***

**To feel boldness in the face of opposition to the gospel.**

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***To seek out ways we can be missionaries for Jesus, wherever God has placed us.***

**What habits have you taken up in your adult life that have changed the way you live or work?**

READ

Acts 11:19–26

**In what ways did those who came to faith continue in evangelism without the apostles?**

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**In what ways could your passions and ambitions be used to build God’s church?**

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**Would you be okay if you, like the men of Cyprus and Cyrene, had an impact but were forgotten by history? Why or why not?**

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Saul was hidden away in Tarsus so that the Jewish authorities would not kill him (9:29–30). We don’t know what Saul did in Tarsus, but it wasn’t the influential ministry he would do later in life. Today, we want our work to be visible and appreciated and we tend to believe the most visible ministry leaders are the most influential and worthy of praise. But we forget that God protected Saul by hiding him. **In what ways can a quiet and small ministry be impactful? How might God be protecting you by not making you more visible?**

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Saul and Barnabas spent a year actively ministering to the Gentiles, a group of people most followers of Jesus had dismissed as unsavable (see 11:1–18). But it was these unlikely converts who became so enraptured by Jesus that they were called Christians, meaning “those of Christ.” **When do people realize you are “of Christ”? What actions, reputation, and attitudes in your life mark you as a person who follows Jesus?.**

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Saul and Barnabas nurtured the faith of the Antioch Christians for a year, which can feel like a long time. But their long commitment to these Gentiles established a church sold out to Jesus and his work. **What could you do to help establish the church in your community? How long would you be willing to do this work?**

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Read Acts 12:1–5.

The persecution of the church in Jerusalem had escalated. King Herod, the political leader of the Jews, killed the disciple James and imprisoned Peter. We could ask: Where was God in all of this chaos? **When life gets difficult, what do you think God is up to?**

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In the midst of this trouble, the church in Jerusalem earnestly prayed. We often think of prayer as a nice thing to do but may not consider it the most important or powerful action we can take in times of distress. **What do you think prayer actually accomplishes? Do you think it changes anything?**

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**Read Acts 12:13–17**

**When you pray, do you believe that God can do what you are praying for? What causes you to doubt that your prayers can be answered?**

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**What prayers have been answered in your life? Do you think of these answered prayers as miraculous? Why or why not?**

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One way to remind ourselves of God’s faithfulness is by reminding ourselves of our prayers and the way God has answered them. **What could you do to regularly recognize God’s provision for your prayers?**

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 **Read Acts 13:1­–3.**

**Where do you see God sending workers and establishing his church in the world today? In your own community?**

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**In what ways is God calling you to be faithful to him and his mission? What could faithfulness to him look like as you go about your week?**

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