

Acts: Multiply (Acts 24:1 – 25:12)

For the week of July 24, 2016

Spiritual Discipline Check-up

Spiritual disciplines can be described as those behaviors that help our spiritual growth and enable us to grow to spiritual maturity. The process of spiritual growth and development begins to take place the moment a person encounters the risen Christ and comes to Him for salvation. How are you doing in the following disciplines?

- Quiet time – Spending daily time alone to be with God.
- Study – Spending daily time reading the Scriptures and meditating on its meaning and importance in your life.
- Prayer – Daily talking to and listening to God about your relationship with Him and about the concern of others.
- Fellowship – Mutual caring and ministry in the body of Christ.

Discuss in your group.

Acts 24:1-9

- Read the story in Acts 24:1-9. As a group, rebuild the story.

Observation: There were three basic charges brought against Paul from the priests and elders through a lawyer named Tertulus. What were the charges? How strong was the evidence for each charge?

Interpretation: Paul was obviously misread (or was he?!) by the Jewish religious leaders; how are some Christians misunderstood and maligned by others today?

Application: How can you use misunderstanding as an opportunity to explain your faith? What are the reasons the gospel is rejected today? Is the gospel difficult to accept?

Acts 24:10-21

- Read the story in Acts 24:10-21. As a group, rebuild the story.

Observation: How does Paul defend himself against the accusations?

Observation: Paul makes four assertions to claim that he supports a faith that is continuous with Biblical religion and with the faith of his people. What are the four assertions?

Application: Are any of these charges against Paul thrown at Christians in Bakersfield? Many secular people feel that Christians are intolerant and even dangerous because of their “narrow” moral views. How can we answer them?

Acts 24:22-27

- Read the story in Acts 24:22-27. As a group, rebuild the story.

Observation: What hints are there of spiritual interest? Why might Felix and Drusilla have been interested?

Interpretation: What does this tell us about how and why people are interested in the gospel?

Observation: What were the four factors that contributed to prevent Felix from embracing the gospel? Are these factors present today? Discuss.

Acts 25:1-12

- Read the story in Acts 25:1-12. As a group, rebuild the story.

Observation: Why was opposition to Paul by the Jewish leaders still strong, even though Paul had been under house arrest for two years?

Interpretation: What was Paul's style in communicating to the court? How do you express yourself when you are on the defensive?

Application: Is there ever a time that is not appropriate to defend your faith? Explain.

Pray

“O Lord, when we are unfairly criticized, misjudged or wrongly charged with misbehavior, please help us respond with love, not hate; forgiveness, not bitterness; hope, not despair. When circumstances threaten to thwart our ministry or our spiritual growth, help us to look up to you – our life, our salvation, our God. Remind us again and again, O Lord, that as we cooperate with you, we will be fruitful ambassadors, through your strength and for your glory! In Jesus' name, Amen.”