



# MULTIPLY

GOSPEL MOVEMENTS | ACTS 1-11

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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# INTRODUCTION

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Acts comes right after Luke in the New Testament and really should be read as “part two” of Luke’s account, as there’s virtually no debate that he wrote both books. When read together as two parts of a whole, there are lots of overlapping themes. Luke writes to show his readers that from before the foundations of the earth, God’s plan was for Jesus to die for His people, for His glory and our joy (Luke 2:10; Acts 2:23, 4:23).

Israel’s failure to be a light to the nations meant that they needed the promised Messiah to come. The True Light came to fulfill what Israel could not accomplish. Jesus is the Light of the world and only through Him can we be saved. This is the divine story that Luke tells.

Acts picks up Luke’s Good News narrative (Luke 1:1-3; Acts 1:1) and follows the growth of the early church as the gospel message spreads. In Acts, we see the promised Holy Spirit fall on believers (Acts 2) and watch as the gospel is extended to Gentiles. Luke makes it clear that God intends to include all the nations of the earth in His kingdom through Jesus’ redeeming love (Acts 10), and that doing so has been His intention from the very beginning (Luke 24:47).

In the Gospel of Luke, Luke tells his readers that Jesus is the Davidic King prophesied about in the Old Testament. His kingdom has come in part, but will be established fully when He returns again. In Acts, the reader sees God’s kingdom expand, people from all nations included, the suffering of the saints, the struggles of the early church, and the overcoming hope of believers. They hope in the promise that one day, Jesus will return, shine His light to the world, and conquer the darkness.

In Acts, we see Jesus give believers the Holy Spirit to empower them to finish His mission—to take the Good News of the gospel to all people, to gather His sheep, to build His body (the church), and to increase His Kingdom, even to the ends of the earth.

This discussion guide is made up of the following sections:

## **1. DISCUSSION**

These questions are designed to help you get into God's Word, apply the sermon, and guide your group discussion. Use the questions that fit best with your group's situation or needs. Beyond your Small Group, these questions can also be used in the context of a Bible study, a discipleship relationship, or personal study.

## **2. FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP**

These questions are created specifically with families in mind and we hope they're useful in facilitating family discussion (maybe around the dinner table, or another family devotional time). These questions are applicable for all ages, including young children. We pray these bless you as a family.

## **3. PRAYER FOCUS**

In the month of January, we're focusing on prayer as a church. As a result, in the first four weeks of this sermon series, instead of our typical "Next Steps" section, there is a two-part prayer focus:

**GROUP PRAYER TIME:** As a Small Group or family, spend intentional time praying through the listed topics and suggestions.

**PRAYERFUL NEXT STEP:** Use these suggestions as you ask the Lord to lead and empower you to take a next step.

## **4. NEXT STEPS**

For the last four weeks of the series, you'll see our typical "Next Steps" section. Whether you take these steps or find other ways to respond, we hope you intentionally act on and obey God's Word.

**DISCUSSION**

1. Luke wrote the book of Acts after writing the gospel of Luke (vs. 1). What major themes from the Gospels (accounts of the things Jesus did and taught when on earth) may Luke be referring to in Acts 1:1? How are these themes helpful to the modern church?
2. What short phrase appears in Acts 1:3 and is also found in Acts 28:30? It highlights a major topic of both Jesus' teaching and Paul's teaching. What are three ways College Park can practically teach about and engage with this topic?
3. The Holy Spirit is mentioned three times in the first eight verses of Acts. What is the Holy Spirit doing in these verses? Does His work only apply to the first apostles? How do you experience the Holy Spirit's work today?
4. In Acts 1:7, Jesus tells the apostles that it's not for them to know the time or season that the Father plans for the restoration of Israel and Jesus' return. What problems might arise with knowing the exact time of Christ's return? Why can we be thankful that we don't know the exact time? What should we be doing as we wait (see the next verse)?
5. Acts 1:8 is a key verse for the whole book of Acts because it lays out a vision. What is the vision that Jesus presents in this verse? How does this verse apply to College Park?
6. What did the "ends of the earth" probably mean to the people in Acts 1:8? Can this phrase still apply to your life and our church today? How?
7. This short passage speaks of Jesus' death and resurrection (Acts 1:3) and His ascension to heaven (1:9). His death was hard for His followers to understand, and it is likely that His ascension was too. What benefits come for Jesus' followers as a result of His death, resurrection, and return to heaven? (see Rom. 4:25; John 16:7, Phil. 2:9, Heb. 4:12-16, 1 John 2:1-3)
8. Acts 1:11 references Jesus' eventual return to His people. What is challenging about the lack of detail given? How will His return benefit God's people? (For further study see 1 Thess. 4, 1 Cor. 15, 2 Pet. 3). How does this reality help you pursue God's call to make disciples both near and far?

## FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

1. Every believer has the Holy Spirit inside of them. How can the Holy Spirit help your family function better? What role does the Spirit play in your family, at church, and at home?
2. Many older churches have cemeteries on their property to remind living family members of the great reunion promised to the people of God in eternity. What believers has your family known who have passed on? Encourage each other that you will see them again when Jesus returns.
3. Think about people in your neighborhood, city, and in the world that need to hear the gospel. Discuss how you can share the gospel with people in your life and how you can support missionaries who are working in places where you cannot go.

## PRAYER FOCUS

### GROUP PRAYER TIME

Pray through the text you just discussed. Consider using the Lord's Prayer as a pattern for your prayers:

- **Hallowed be your name (vs. 2):** Jesus, You are exalted in Your ascension and we set You apart as holy.
- **Your kingdom come (vs. 3):** Jesus, You rule in all the world. We submit to your rulership and pray for Your kingdom to increase in Indy, downtown, and in countries around the world.
- **Your will be done on earth as on heaven (vs. 8):** God, please give us a heart of obedience. We want to be witnesses for You this year.
- **Give us our daily bread (vs. 7):** We don't know everything that lies ahead, but please grant us submissive spirits to trust in the authority of Jesus.
- **Forgive us as we forgive others and deliver us from the evil one (vs. 8):** Forgive us of laziness and help us get up to pursue Your kingdom and share the gospel that will ultimately defeat the evil one.

### PRAYERFUL NEXT STEP

Pray and ask God to clearly show you how to be involved in College Park's mission of igniting a passion to follow Jesus (Next Door Mission, Brookside, Global Outreach, Evangelism, etc).

**DISCUSSION**

1. What are your biggest obstacles to a deeper and more consistent prayer life?
2. What does it look like to be “devoted to prayer” (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:4)? What changes do you need to make to be “devoted to prayer”?
3. Many of the examples of prayer we see in Acts are prayers offered in community (see Acts 1:14). What are practical ways you can incorporate heartfelt prayer into your Small Group, family, and friendship interactions?
4. What are the benefits or the effects of prayer?
5. Look up examples of prayer in Acts: 1:24; 4:31; 6:6; 12:12; 16:25; 20:36; 22:17. What are the circumstances and reasons for prayer in these passages?
6. Many of our prayers consist of asking God for something (requests). How can we better include praise, thanksgiving, confession, and lament into our prayer lives?
7. What’s something you can intentionally do this week to grow in your prayer life?

## **FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP**

1. How do we know God hears us when we pray?
2. Why does God want us to pray?
3. What's one thing we can thank God for and one thing we can praise God for in our prayers today?

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

### **GROUP PRAYER TIME**

Practice honest, heartfelt prayer as a group. While it's not bad to ask for prayer for people in your life or for physical issues, focus your prayer time together on issues of the heart. Ask God for His help or power for a specific situation, or respond to His Word. Include thanksgiving, praise, and confession in your time together.

### **PRAYERFUL NEXT STEP**

Prayerfully consider committing to 30 days of prayer to begin establishing a habit of prayer in your life.

## WEEK THREE WITNESS

Acts 2

### DISCUSSION

1. The disciples had been waiting for the Holy Spirit to come and when He does, it sounds like Ezek. 37. Compare these two passages and list the similarities you see. This seems like a unique event, but what can we learn from it for today?
2. Acts 2:5-11 has been described as the “reversal of Babel” (Gen. 11). In Genesis, God divided the languages, but here the languages are united for the hearers. How does this passage support God’s plan to have followers from diverse people groups? What are God’s plans for diversity in His church? How does this apply to College Park and our witness?
3. What does the prophecy of Joel that we see in Acts 2:17-21 say is necessary for salvation? Does one need to speak in tongues or prophesy? What is the key to receiving salvation (see vs. 21)? How does this reality affect our witness?
4. In Acts 2:23 (also 4:23), we see that God plays a sovereign role in the redemption of man that includes Christ’s death. How can this verse help us as we encounter difficult circumstances? Read Rom. 8:28, 32. Which moments of life do these verses apply to? Some? All?
5. As Peter concludes his witness, in verse 36 he affirms two realities of Jesus: that He is Lord and Christ. He says that you must acknowledge both to be saved. What do these two titles mean? How should we share the gospel in light of these titles? As a believer, how do these titles help you honor Jesus?
6. Peter practices witnessing (telling what he knows and has experienced) throughout his sermon (see verse 40). What patterns of witnessing do you see in Peter’s example? How can you replicate them in your life?
7. What did the earliest church community do together (see verse 42)? Do we do the same things today? What things do we need to work on at College Park?
8. Verse 47 says, “the LORD added to their number....” How can this statement encourage us in our witness? How should it motivate us?



## **FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP**

1. Read Acts 2:42. Do you need to be in a local church to do these things? Can you do them alone? Should your family do these things together in a church setting?
2. The next time you're in a church service, think about this passage and notice the pieces of the service that fit this pattern.
3. Thank God for the family of faith that is united by the Holy Spirit. Spend some time thanking and praising Him for the unity that comes from being filled with His Spirit. Are there broken relationships that you need to mend in the power of the Spirit? If kids or parents in a family often fight, encourage one another to turn to and rely on the Holy Spirit to help you live in unity with each other.

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

### **GROUP PRAYER TIME**

- Pray prayers of thanksgiving for an intercessor like the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 8:27)
- Pray for power from the Spirit to live a holy life, pleasing to the Lord (Rom. 8:4)
- Pray for the Spirit to open God's Word to you and lead you in truth (Rom. 8:14)
- Pray for the Spirit to help you to persevere to the end and not give up in hard times (Eph. 1:13- 14)
- Pray for the Spirit to strengthen you to witness.

### **PRAYERFUL NEXT STEP**

Pray that the Spirit will give you boldness like Peter to witness to your neighbors and others (Acts 5:32), and that He will open up opportunities this week.

**DISCUSSION**

1. What should Christian community look like? How is a Christian community different than a healthy community of unbelievers?
2. What unites the people in Acts 2:42-47 and Acts 4:32-36? How is the source of their oneness connected to the kind of fellowship and behaviors described?
3. In Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-36, what are some common characteristics or practices of God's people? How do these inform your understanding of what biblical community should look like?
4. How does unity in Christ disarm differences (like ethnicity, gender, age, personality types, income levels, etc.) between groups of people? How can we apply unity principles to our relationships? How should we view one another in Christ?
5. What keeps you from developing deeper friendships and pursuing intimacy with people at church or in your Small Group? How you can help create and participate in biblical community?
6. Both Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-36 reference generosity and caring for one another financially as one aspect of the church's life together. How can your Small Group practically care for one another, or others in the church, through generosity of time, money, meals, serving, or resources?
7. In these passages and all throughout Acts, a big part of how God's people encourage one another is by reminding each other of what God's Word says and ways that God has been at work in the past. How can you be intentional in sharing ways you've seen God at work and what He's taught you in the Word?

## **FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP**

1. If we are part of God's family through faith in Christ, how does that unite us with other believers? How should we treat each other as a result?
2. Why do we need other people in our life? Why do we need to have friends, family, and church members in our lives instead of being alone?
3. Growing in community will not happen by just being *around* others. It takes being *involved* in the lives of people you're around. Come up with one or two ways you can take relationships deeper.

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

### **GROUP PRAYER TIME**

Pray for the community of our church. Pray for children, students, singles, parents, staff, Elders, married, widowed, suffering, those experiencing conflict, etc. Ask God to bring unity in our community across age, socioeconomic, and demographic differences.

### **PRAYERFUL NEXT STEP**

Prayerfully consider one way you, your group, or family can practice biblical community by caring for the needs of others. Find someone to financially help, a family to serve through meals or yard work, a group of people to encourage with thank you notes, an organization to volunteer for together, or some other way to help.

**DISCUSSION**

1. Read Acts 6:1 and summarize the situation the church is facing. While the growth of the early church was God's plan, what does this verse say the challenges are that come with growth? What should modern churches pay close attention to as they grow? How should this influence the way we grow in regard to our priorities?
2. Read Acts 6:2. What's the first step the disciples take to address the problem? How can this example practically influence the way we handle conflict in the church?
3. In the second part of verse 2, the disciples said, "It is not good that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables." In verse, 3 they appoint Spirit-filled believers for the task of caring for widows. Many ministries and organizations send aid or relief but neglect the gospel. What kind of relationship between earthly "relief" and spiritual "relief" does this verse highlight? Is it important for both types of relief to be carried out in a church ministry? Why or why not?
4. In verses 3 and 4, the disciples suggest a solution to address the situation. How does their solution demonstrate a conviction to prioritize both the Word of God and His people? How should these priorities instruct any community of believers? (See 1 Cor. 12:14-28.)
5. Notice the qualifications for the people who were to minister to widows and care for their earthly needs. They, like Stephen, were "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." What does this tell us about the importance of every role in the body of Christ, regardless of calling, career, race, gender, etc.?
6. In verse 6, how are the believers who will care for the widows commissioned? What does this tell us about how we end disputes among members of the body? Who in your group can you pray and effectively "send out" for the work of ministry in his or her daily life?
7. What's the ultimate result of the body working together? How does this encourage us to work through our differences for the sake of the kingdom?

## **FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP**

1. Have you ever experienced a disagreement or dispute because of a strong feeling or opinion? How did you handle it? Did you respond in anger or “sweep it under the rug”? What could you have done differently?
2. Based on this passage in Acts, what’s the best way to approach conflicts, disputes, or disagreements? How does focusing on Jesus and His calling for your life help you do that? (See verses 2 and 6).
3. None of us are super heroes and we need help daily. What are some of the priorities you’ve established for your life? Why is it important to work together with the body of Christ to carry out our Christian priorities and calling?
4. What happens when the family of God comes together to live out God’s commands? (See vs. 7.)

## **NEXT STEPS**

1. Next time a conflict arises, sit down with the people involved to work through it and reach a godly conclusion. Pray and ask God to help you prioritize the right things and ask Him to bless the conclusion.
2. If you aren’t currently serving the body of Christ with your gifts, look for a way to use them for the glory of God, the joy of His people, and the expansion of His kingdom.

## DISCUSSION

This passage contrasts two types of tests that believers can experience: internal and external. Each test has different results, but an internal result may have external effects, and vice-versa. Each test requires sacrificial living

### 1. The Internal Test

**Test** (Acts 6:7-8): In these verses, the church experiences an **internal test** that could either lead to division or to growth of God's kingdom. What does this type of test teach us about how to live in Christian community? What adjustments or sacrifices might we need to make?

**Result** (Acts 6:7-8): What is the **external result** of living in unity by the power of the Spirit? Why should believers pursue unity in the midst of trials?

### 2. The External Test

**Interrogation** (Acts 6:9-6:14): In these verses, we see Stephen being tested by an **external force**. These Jews disagreed with him and wanted to end his ministry at all costs. Does your lifestyle stand out as different to the world? How can your life display and proclaim Christ daily?

**Response** (Acts 6:14-7:53): Stephen doesn't answer the crowd defensively. Instead, like Jesus, he focuses on truth. How can Stephen's example (using the biblical storyline) guide us in confronting the world? Why does how we respond matter? Why isn't Stephen concerned about death? What does this tell us about the ultimate sacrifice someone can give? (See Phil. 1:21)

3. Throughout Stephen's message to the Jews (Acts 6:14-7:53), he recounts four promises God made to the Jews (and correspondingly makes to us).
- An offspring/a people (Acts 7:5-6) (Gen. 17:4-6)
  - Rescue (Acts 7:9-10; 7:36)
  - Fulfilled promises (Acts 7:17; 7:45-48)
  - To raise up a prophet like Moses, the Righteous One (Acts 7:37-39; 7:52-53)

How does each promise impact the believer? How might remembering these promises help us in our walk with Jesus? What do these four things tell us about our inability to save ourselves?

4. While some people accept the Good News (see Acts 6:7-8), many reject it. How does Stephen respond to this rejection? What can we learn from his response?
5. Stephen endures suffering by looking to Jesus. How can you practically look to Jesus when you experience suffering? Specifically, how can focusing on Jesus being at the right hand of the Father help us endure suffering? What happens if we try to endure suffering or sacrifices without Jesus?

## **FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP**

1. When Stephen is confronted with a life-threatening situation, what does he say? What does he do? How should we handle tough situations?
2. How does seeing Jesus help us endure hard times?
3. Why is it so important that God promises to raise up a Righteous One like Moses (Jesus)?
4. Why does Luke, the writer of Acts, say Stephen “fell asleep” when he died?

## **NEXT STEPS**

1. Next time you find yourself being tested by the unbelieving world, respond with truth-filled words that lead to the gospel. Consider reading Jeff Vanderstelt’s *Gospel Fluency* for help in training yourself to do this well.
2. Meditate on and journal about ways you see God working in your life and in the lives of people. It’s easy to forget that God is the One at work in us to “will and to work for His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). How has He blessed your perseverance and faith? Where do you see fruit? Thank Him for what He has done and is doing in and through you and those around you.



## WEEK SEVEN TRANSFORMATION

Acts 9

### DISCUSSION

1. Paul's (Saul's) conversion, recorded in Acts 9, is nothing short of incredible. However, if you are a Christian, is your conversion any less miraculous than Paul's? Why or why not? Read Rom. 3:23-24. What is the miracle that occurs in every person's conversion?
2. How have you seen Jesus revealed? How do you see Jesus continually changing and transforming you day-by-day?
3. Read 2 Cor. 3:18. According to this passage, spiritual transformation is a work accomplished by the Holy Spirit. What practical steps can you take to assist the process of transformation in your life each day?
4. Throughout Paul's story of transformation, we see other people (like Ananias and Barnabas) supporting and encouraging his ministry. How can the church support and encourage individuals as they continue to grow in Christ?
5. Paul was certainly undeserving of the gospel, but God considered him a "chosen instrument" to be used for growing the church (Acts 9:15). How does this reality change your perception of even the "worst people" in your life and the world?
6. Ananias considered Paul's conversion unlikely but remained obedient to God's calling and was foundational to Paul's early ministry. Who in your life seems like an "unlikely" conversion but desperately needs the gospel? How can you approach this person to share the gospel with them?
7. Immediately following his conversion, Paul began preaching the gospel passionately and boldly (Acts 9:20). What barriers distract you from sharing the gospel and multiplying the local church? How can you overcome them?
8. Just as Paul faced persecution when fulfilling his calling, we can expect discomfort and disagreement when we share the gospel with others. What comforts do you sometimes consider more important than sharing the gospel, and how can you overcome the temptation to seek comfort over calling?



## **FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP**

1. What does it mean to be transformed by Jesus? What's the difference between a person who has been transformed by Jesus and a person who has not been transformed by Jesus?
2. Why do we need to be transformed? Can we initiate this transformation on our own?
3. Who do you know that needs to be transformed by Jesus? Pray for this person as a family and talk about ways you can build trust with that person that might lead to gospel conversations.
4. What steps can you take as a family to grow in your transformation and help the church multiply like Paul did?

## **NEXT STEPS**

1. Read through Acts 9 again, noticing when the Holy Spirit is mentioned or involved. Do you consider the Holy Spirit necessary in accomplishing your calling? Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and strengthen you like He empowered Paul and the church in the New Testament.
2. Reflect on how God has already transformed you and prepared you for strengthening the local church. Consider how you can continue to be transformed and also help multiply the body.

**DISCUSSION**

1. In Acts chapter 10, we meet a man named Cornelius. How is Cornelius's Gentile background significant to the story of Acts?
2. In Acts 10:10-16, Peter receives a vision where he is commanded to eat "common" animals. What significance does this command have for a Jewish man? How does the vision and God's command connect to meeting Cornelius? (See Lev. 11, Isa. 11:10-12.)
3. We see God use visions and angels to communicate His will to people in this passage. Should modern-day Christians expect to hear authoritative commands from God in visions or from angels? Why or why not? How does God primarily speak to His people today?
4. The Holy Spirit plays a very active role in the book of Acts. What do we learn about the Holy Spirit in chapters 10-11? Can someone be saved without receiving the Holy Spirit? According to the Word of God, what signs show that we have the Holy Spirit?
5. After Peter sees the Holy Spirit fall on Cornelius and his household, he goes and reports it to the church. Why do you think he does this? How does the confirmation of Peter's testimony by the church clarify the mission of the church?
6. The Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit marks a significant moment in church history. It fulfilled the words of the prophets and confirmed to the church that the gospel was for all people. In what ways can the church sometimes affirm that the gospel is for everyone with their words, but live and act as if it's only for certain people? (Example: Gal. 2:11-14)
7. Who in your life do you find it hard to believe the gospel can reach? What truths in this passage can help you believe that the gospel is for them too?
8. In Acts 11:19-30, we see the gospel spreading as persecution causes believers from Jerusalem to scatter, just like Jesus prophesied (Acts 1:8, Luke 24:44-49). How has God used hardship in your life to advance the gospel in your life and the lives of others?

## FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

1. Who can Jesus save? (Acts 4:12)
2. Who among your family or friends needs Jesus? Take some time to pray for those near and far who need the gospel to reach their hearts.
3. Who is the Holy Spirit?
4. What role does the Holy Spirit play in our lives? (See John 14:15-26, Gal. 5:16-26)

## NEXT STEPS

1. Take time this week to intentionally pray for unbelievers in your life. You may struggle to believe the gospel can reach them, but ask the Holy Spirit to open their eyes like He did for Cornelius and his family. Pray for boldness to share and faith to believe that God can and does work miracles.
2. Consider taking a Vision Trip with College Park Church to see firsthand how the gospel is for every tribe, nation, and tongue. Learn more about Vision Trips at **[yourchurch.com/visiontrips](http://yourchurch.com/visiontrips)**.











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