



## **READ**

Acts 20:17–24; 21:10–14, 26–36; 24:24–27; 26:12–26.

**Note:** We have made a daily reading guide of Acts 20–26 so that you might read this whole section throughout your week. You can find the reading plan at the end of this study in **Go Deeper Section 3**.

## **WATCH**

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Louie Giglio’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

**In what ways can God’s mission be applied to any person’s passions?**

**What should we do if we think our story is boring or doesn’t have any value?**

**What is the benefit of continual faithfulness?**

*Show Session 7: The Supreme Value of the Mission (17 minutes).*

## **DISCUSS**

This session is all about your primary motivation in life, what Louie called your “why.” For Paul, his motivation was to carry the name of Jesus to the ends of the earth. That may seem like a broad motivation, but it gave him a specific purpose throughout his ministry.

As we examine Paul’s ministry, think about your own “why.” Start by thinking broadly. This mission should be applicable in every area of your life, not just in your work or on Sunday mornings. Louie challenged us to avoid the “wheres” and “whos”—where you are, who you are with, and where you would like to be—and simply to focus on your mission no matter where you are or who’s around you. **What would you say is your primary purpose in life? What is your greatest goal?**

In the video, Louie talked about the four things that will help us live like Paul, sold out for the mission of Christ. First, we must have a new mindset understanding that “the greatest thing [we] can do with [our] li[ves] is to help someone else come to life.”

Read Acts 20:17–24.

**According to these verses, what is Paul’s primary motivation? How much is he willing to endure to accomplish the mission God has given to him?**

**In what ways do your goals in life serve the mission of God?**

As we learned in the video, Paul’s specific mission was to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, but he did not wait until he got to Rome to serve Jesus. **In what ways are you serving God through your career, your free time, and in your social life?**

Following Jesus causes us to have a new mindset, giving us a new way to see everything we do, no matter where we are or who we are with. **How could you use the normal events of your life to help others find life in Jesus?**

**Note:** To learn more about Paul’s motivation and values, go to **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this study.

The second challenge Louie gave us in the video was to “keep your ‘yes’ on the table.” It can be easy to follow Jesus at times, but following him will not always be easy.

We have to be willing to follow him, even when the road ahead looks difficult. Read Acts 21:10–14, 26–36.

Paul knew exactly what God was calling him into and was still completely committed to God’s plan. **How would you react if someone like Agabus told you about the difficulty in your future?**

**What’s unique about Paul’s response to Agabus?**

When Paul was attacked in Jerusalem, things went worse than expected. He was not only arrested, as Agabus had prophesied, but was also beaten by an angry mob. Despite these circumstances, God had not abandoned Paul. **When things go worse than you expect, where do you think God is? Are you ever tempted to think that God’s plan has gone wrong?**

In the video, Louie said, “If I had seen all the twists and turns in my story, I would have had difficulty completely surrendering to God’s plan.” **In what ways has God been faithful to you in unexpected and difficult times?**

Louie’s advice to us was to commit to God’s plan before we know what life holds for us, to trust God with our future life as we have trusted him with our eternity. **What would it look like to trust God and to stay faithful to your “why” even when your life takes an unexpected turn?**

**Note:** To think more deeply about a right perspective of difficulty, go to **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this study.

The third encouragement Louie had for us was to keep telling our story, no matter where we are or who we are with. Every time we see Paul in these chapters, he is using his story to share the gospel.

Some of us have incredible stories of radical life change. Some of us grew up in the church and don’t think our stories are very impressive. **How would you characterize your story?**

We have to stop thinking that some stories of salvation are better than others. Whenever God redeems a sinner, it is a miracle. Louie said, “If you have a story of grace, you have a story to share.” Read Acts 26:12–29.

When Paul shared his story with Agrippa, he began by explaining who he was before he met Jesus. **In broad**

**strokes, who were you like before you met Jesus?  
What motivated you? Where did you look for hope?**

Paul then described his personal conversion. **When did you come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ? What was it like?**

Finally, Paul described his life after meeting Jesus—his new motivation, his sure hope, and his new lifestyle. **What changed after you met Jesus? In what ways is God still changing you?**

Those three beats—life before Jesus, your conversion, and life after meeting Jesus—are your story of grace. **Who could you share that story with this week?**

The fourth and final encouragement Louie gave to us was to remain faithful to God because faithfulness leads to fruitfulness. There are some seasons of life that seem quiet, when it doesn't seem like God is doing much in our lives. But even in those quiet moments, God's call remains the same. Read Acts 24:24–27.

Paul was arrested and left in chains during the most prolific time in his ministry. This appeared to be the worst time to be inactive. Even so, Paul was left in prison for two years. Unlike when Peter was arrested or when Paul was imprisoned with Silas, there was no miracle that released him. **When has it felt like God has forgotten you?**

Remember, Paul's primary goal was to travel to Rome to preach the gospel. Read Acts 25:9–12.

God had not forgotten Paul. Paul's difficult circumstances had actually paved the way for his mission to Rome. Like Paul, our mission for God may take some unexpected paths. We must be committed to serving God no matter where we are, because he may change the road to get us to where he wants us to be. **What do you expect God will do in your future? What will you do if God does not meet your expectations?**

**In what ways could God use your current circumstances to build his church?**

**What can you do to trust God with your path, even if it is not a path you would choose for yourself?**

Think back to your "why." **In what ways, if any, is it confined to a specific place or circumstance?**

**In what ways can you refine that purpose statement to fit your life no matter where you are?**

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In every season and every place, God is working through us. Like Louie said, if we are alive, we are called to share our stories with the people in front of us. If we are faithful to God, regardless of where he takes us, there will eventually be incredible fruit.

**What does it look like to be faithful to God where you are today? Whom has God put you in front of that you could help find life in Jesus?**

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**LAST WORD**

We tend to over-focus on where we want to be in life, but “where” is not an important issue for a Christian. God wants us to focus on his mission, the great “why” of our lives. No matter where God takes us, even if it is far from where we want to be, we can fulfill God’s purpose for us. That frees us to go anywhere and to be around anyone!

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The most important question we can answer today is not “Where do I want to be?” Rather, it is “How can I be faithful to God, no matter where I am?”

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## **GO DEEPER**

This section has two potential functions:

1. It can supplement your small group discussion with topics your group may be interested in. We've highlighted where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide. As the leader, it would be good to familiarize yourself with this section just in case your conversation turns to one of these topics.
2. These sections can also function as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting. Consider using these sections to deepen your group's study of the book of Acts.

### **1. Paul's Motivation and Values**

This session was all about our motivations and resetting our ambitions on Christ and his mission. But that is easier said than done. It can be difficult to break free of the worldly ways we define ourselves and our hope. Our culture likes to reduce people to blurbs in social media bio lines, telling us that the most important things about us are our accomplishments and social affiliations. Read Paul's "bio" in Philippians 3:3–6.

**What in your past gives you confidence? What about yourself do you want to define you?**

**What is your public reputation? What do people notice first about you?**

Paul was the top dog in some of the most prestigious groups of his time. People wanted to be him and to be around him. But everything that would impress the masses was completely worthless compared to what he had in Jesus. Read Philippians 3:7–11.

Paul saw his accomplishments as losses and goes as far as to call them "garbage." The Greek word *skubala* can also be translated "animal excrement." In other words, he wanted his reputation to be so detached from his personal accomplishments that someone could not even catch a whiff of them.

**What do you want people to notice or "smell" when they get close to you? What do you hope they notice first about you and your reputation?**

**How long do people need to be around you before they start to notice the influence of Jesus in your life?**

Paul's primary motivation was to know Jesus and to be like him. That was what he wanted people to know about him before they knew anything else. That was his "why" and his reputation.

**What would it look like to make your Christ-focused motivation your reputation? What, if anything, would need to change?**

## 2. Trusting God in Difficult Places

We will all have seasons in our lives that we neither expected nor wanted. We will know suffering and pain. But it is important to know that these times are not a sign of God's absence. Even in the darkest days, God is still with us. Read Psalm 23.

Read it again.

**What stands out to you about God in this psalm?**

Though David was in a "valley of shadow and death," God still led him to moments of peace and rest. In many ways, this psalm is a prayer of thankfulness.

**What moments of peace and rest has God given you in the last month?**

**In what ways is God showing you goodness and mercy right now?**

Take some time to meditate and pray over this psalm. Rewrite Psalm 23 as a prayer in your own words. Even though you might feel like you are in darkness, forgotten, surrounded by death, God has not left you and is caring for you like a shepherd cares for his sheep.

## 3. Acts 20–26 Reading Plan

Acts is a long book, and we won't be able to study every verse of it during each of these sessions. This reading plan will help you familiarize yourself with the entirety of the book so that you can dig more deeply into God's Word.

This week, use this reading guide to break up Acts 20–26. Paul's traveling ministry comes to an end and most of these chapters cover his repeated trials and appearances in front of Hebrew and Roman rulers. Take note of the way Paul engages with the rulers, what is most important to him, and the way he endures life in prison.



- Day 1: Paul in Macedonia and Greece (Acts 20)
- Day 2: Paul Travels to Jerusalem (Acts 21)
- Day 3: Paul's Defense (Acts 22)
- Day 4: The Assassination Plot Against Paul (23)
- Day 5: Paul in Front of Felix (Acts 24)
- Day 6: Paul Appeals to Caesar (Acts 25)
- Day 7: Paul in Front of Agrippa (Acts 26)

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