SESSION GOALS	
Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.	
Main Idea We can trust God with the detours of our lives, knowing hat they will serve to accomplish his mission and make us more like Jesus.	
Head Change To know that God has a purpose for every circumstance In our lives.	
Heart Change To feel seen by the God who created us and sends us but to do his work.	
Life Change To use the unique gifts and circumstances God has given us to accomplish his mission for our lives.	
OPEN	
Think of a time when you were lost. What did it feel ike? How did you find your way to where you needed o be?	
There are times in our lives when we feel lost, like we have missed God's directions, or we aren't where we are supposed to be. Our discomfort can leave us scrambling, praying, searching for a way to change where we are in life. But God has not forgotten us; even when we feel lost, God is at work. In this session, we will see that detours are purposeful and can be some of the most impactful moments in our lives.	

READ	
Acts 27:21–26, 39–44; 28:16–31.	
<b>Note</b> : We have made a daily reading guide of Acts 27–28 so that you might read this whole section throughout your week. You can find the reading plan at the end of this study in <b>Go Deeper Section 4.</b>	
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.	
How does God use Paul's difficult circumstances?	
Why is it important that God sees and personally knows you?	
In what ways is Acts "living history"?	
Show Session 8: Nothing Can Stop God's Plan (14 minutes).	

## **DISCUSS**

A lot of us have expectations for how our lives will go, particularly when we are following Jesus. We think that if we are following God's plan, fulfilling his purpose for us, that life will be easy sailing. But in these last two chapters of Acts, when Paul was doing exactly what God called him to do, things continually went wrong. Read Acts 27:1–8, 21–26, and 28:1–3.	
How would you describe Paul's road to Rome?	
Paul wanted to go to Rome and Jesus had confirmed this goal in a dream (Acts 19:21; 23:11). By all accounts, Paul was going in the right direction, but his road was anything but easy. Slow travel, poor decision-making, and stormy seas turned his simple path into a winding, difficult journey. In the same way, following Jesus will not always be an easy road. At times, there will be roadblocks and hindrances to get where God wants us to go.	
What challenges do you feel are keeping you from reaching your God-given potential?	
Louie shared the story of his friends, Jay and Katherine Wolf, whose lives took a detour after Katherine suffered a stroke at a young age. But the Wolfs did not view the effects of the stroke on Katherine as a punishment or God failing them, rather they saw it as a God-given platform to fulfill his mission in their own lives. In what ways could the detours in your own life be God's assignment to fulfill his mission through you?	
Louie said, "Your detour is for someone else's deliverance." The detours in our life can make us hyperfocused on ourselves and our own problems, but God might use your detour to bring more people to salvation.  What makes it hard to believe that your detour could help someone else believe in Jesus?	
Paul wanted to preach the gospel in Rome, but his detour took him to Malta. God detoured Paul so that people could be healed and know the name of Jesus.  What new opportunities has a detour in your life given you to serve others or introduce someone to Jesus?	
God may change your path without changing your final destination. It may be more difficult or entirely different than you imagined. What could it look like to hold your expectations for your path loosely?	

In what ways could you prepare your heart for the divine detours in your plan?	
<b>Note:</b> To learn more about Paul's ultimate missionary goals, go to <b>Go Deeper Section 1</b> at the end of this study.	
Louie showed us a small detail in Acts that points to a much larger truth. In Acts 27:37, there is a quick note of	
the exact number of people on this ship. Through this we see that God is concerned with everyone, not just the heavy hitters like Paul. <b>In what ways have you</b>	
compared your purpose to others'?	
Have you ever felt less important to God's mission than other Christians? What has made you feel that	
way?	
In the video, Louie reminded us that God has a purpose	
for every one of us. "You are not insignificant. You are not incidental. You are not forgotten. God created you	
for a reason and he uniquely gifted you to be a part of	
the story of his church." What is your role in your local	
church? In what ways are you using your gifts to serve the body of Christ?	
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What is your role in building the church? Whom has God providentially placed you next to that do not	
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Would you say that Paul's mission to Rome was a success or a failure? Why?	
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In what ways was Paul doing exactly what God called him to do in Rome?	
When we look at Paul's life and ministry, we realize that	
God's mission will often bring us into difficult circumstances. Paul was rejected by his countrymen,	
run out of cities, imprisoned, beaten, shipwrecked, snake-bitten, and attacked by angry mobs. <b>In what</b>	
ways does Paul's example change the way you see the hurdles to God's mission in your own life?	
the narales to God's mission in your own me.	
House arrest may have stopped Paul's missionary travels, but it did not stop the spread of the gospel. In	
the video, Louie pointed out that Paul penned the books	
known as the Prison Epistles—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon—while he was in the Roman	
prison. God can work through any circumstance. In what ways is God working through your current	
circumstances?	
What could it look like to trust God, even when you	
don't understand where he is leading you?	
Acts ends with Paul in a prison cell. But the story of the	
church did not end shackled in Rome. The living story of Acts is now being written through us. <b>Who handed you</b>	
the baton of faith? Who might you hand that baton off	
to or welcome into the work you are already doing?	
Note: To examine Paul's final thoughts on his life and	
ministry, go to <b>Go Deeper Section 3</b> at the end of this study.	
study.	
We have reached the end of The Acts of the Apostles.	
Take a moment to think back over the last eight sessions and your own time reading the book of Acts.	
What have you learned about the mission of God and your place in it?	
In what ways has your perspective of your current	
circumstances changed while reading Acts?	
As you leave this study, what specific acts of	
faithfulness will you practice to help build and establish God's church?	

## LAST WORD

It may be easy to feel small or inconsequential. In the age of social media, we are told that only the people with hundreds of thousands of followers have any influence. But in God's view, every single person is important to the mission of God. You have a role to play in continuing the story of Acts in your office, your city, or even internationally.

Remember what you have learned in this study: God has a promise and a purpose for your life and there is no circumstance that can separate you from him and no detour that can derail his mission. At the end of the session, Louie reminded us, "The greatest thing you can do with your life is to bring someone else to life." When you take that step, Acts is not over; it is still being written through you.

## **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 Ultimate Mission Many of us have ambitions for our lives and goals we want to accomplish. Sometimes these goals align with God's plan for our lives; other times, they don't. So how do we hold our plans loosely while still aiming to reach our goals? Paul had a God-given goal to reach Rome, but he had his sights set on the ends of the known world. Read Romans 15:22-28. What was Paul's hope for his life? Where was he hoping to go? For Paul, Rome was a pitstop. His desire was to travel to the edge of the known world, Spain, where the Roman empire ended and the Atlantic Ocean stretched beyond sight and knowledge. In what ways would Paul's goal fulfill the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20? While there is some tradition from early church fathers (Jerome and Chrysostom) and the Catholic Church that Paul did reach Spain, there is no hard evidence that he ever did go to the ends of the earth before his death. We don't know if Paul ever got to where he wanted to go. If he did not reach Spain, there is no indication that he regretted it (see Go Deeper Section 3). Now, think of the goals you have for your own life. You don't need to make every one of your goals focused on the mission of God, but you do need to examine and understand why those goals are important to you. What do want to accomplish in your life? rightnow MEDIA

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

What if God had a different plan for your life? What	
would you think or feel if you never accomplished your goals?	
Whether our goals are personally fulfilling or aimed at	
furthering the mission of God, we may not reach our	
goals in the ways we expect. Read Psalm 16:1–3, 9.	
What could it look like for you to hand over your plans to the Lord?	
How could you be open to God's timing and direction as you seek to reach your goals?	
<b>2. Discovering Your Purpose</b> One of the most pressing questions in our lives is "What	
is my purpose?" We often find ourselves asking that	
question when we are at a crossroads or are dissatisfied with life. But trying to figure out our purpose is difficult	
because, in many ways, we are trying to understand the arc of our life's story while we are still in the middle of it.	
But you don't need to understand the full story before you know your next step.	
What are you passionate about?	
What unique gifts has God given you? Is there	
something that comes easy to you that is a struggle for other people?	
What brings you joy or helps you recognize the beauty and brilliance of God in your own life?	
In the video for this session, Louie reminded us that no one is inconsequential to God's plan. You don't have to	
be in ministry to minister to the world through your life. Review your answers to the questions above. <b>What is</b>	
the intersection between your passion, your gifts, and your God-focused joy?	
It is shockingly easy to use our gifts in prideful ways, but God calls us to give our lives to others. Read Philippians	
2:3–7. In what ways could selfish ambition and vanity creep into your passion and gifts?	
What could it look like to use your gifts and passions to treat others as better than yourself?	
In what ways could God work through your gifts and	
passions to further his mission?	

	It is helpful to think of your big dreams and goals, but	
	instead of getting caught up in thinking about where you want to be in ten or fifteen years, think about your	
	next step. What can you do today or tomorrow to explore God's greater purpose for your life?	
	explore God's greater purpose for your life:	
	3. Paul's Final Word	
	What is a successful life? That feels like an enormous question, especially in our culture, which is driven by the	
	hope of personal success. No matter your stage of life or income level, every one of us has an image of what	
	success looks like. What do you think it takes to be	
	successful? What would change in your life if you achieved your definition of success?	
	Paul accomplished more in his life than most of us could	
	dream to achieve. He was a leader of the church, gifted theologian, prolific evangelist, and he stood before	
	kings and emperors. You couldn't count the lives he	
	influenced across the dozens of cities he preached in. But in the end, none of his "success" mattered to him.	
	Read 2 Timothy 4:6–8. What seem to have mattered most to Paul when he looked back on his life?	
	Paul was faithful to God, and in the end that was all that	
	mattered. In 2 Timothy 2:3–6, Paul illustrates his faithfulness to the dedication of a soldier, an athlete, and	
	a farmer. Take a moment to examine each analogy.	
	In what ways was Paul faithful in his fight (like a	
	soldier)?	
	In what ways was Paul faithful his race (like an athlete)?	
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	In what ways did Paul keep his faith (like a farmer)?	
	Like a soldier, Paul served and suffered. Like an athlete, he trained and competed obediently in God's mission.	
	Like a farmer, he sowed seeds of the gospel and waited in faith for a spiritual harvest.	
	Success for Christians is not wrapped up in our income,	
	our achievements, our influence, or our individuality.	
	Success in God's economy is all about faithfulness to Jesus and his mission. <b>What would change in your life</b>	
	if you defined "success" as faithfulness?	
ri	If success is gauged by our faithfulness, your worth is not defined by the changing standards of our culture.	

You can be truly successful in any circumstance with any level of income or influence. You can be successful right now! What would it look like for you to be faithful in your current circumstances, even if you aren't successful by our cultural standards?	
4. Acts 27–28 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 examine the final chapters of Acts.	
<u>Day 1</u> : Paul Sets Sail (Acts 27:1–38) <u>Day 2</u> : Shipwrecks and Snake Bites (Acts 27:39–28:10) <u>Day 3</u> : Paul Reaches Rome (Acts 28:11–16) <u>Day 4</u> : Paul's Evangelism in Rome (28:17–28) <u>Day 5</u> : Paul's Life in Rome (Acts 28:30–31)	