

PHYLLIS J. LE PEAU

ACTS 13–28

*Part 2: God's Power at
the Ends of the Earth*


LifeGuide®
BIBLE STUDIES

Over
15 Million
LifeGuides
Sold

12 STUDIES FOR INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS



InterVarsity Press
ivpress.com

Taken from *Acts 13–28* (LifeGuide Bible Studies) by Phyllis J. Le Peau.

Copyright © 1992, 2002 by Phyllis J. Le Peau.

Published by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. www.ivpress.com

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF ACTS 13–28

Just before Acts begins, the disciples are wallowing in the mire of their craven fear, self-doubt and personal shame. Apart from their master, they are a pathetic group indeed (John 20:19; Luke 24:11). However, by the second chapter of Acts, the same men who abandoned Jesus at Gethsemane have become irrepressible dynamos, preaching with utter conviction—and at great personal risk—“the mighty acts of God.”

Acts is an important book for us today because it confirms that the power of the Holy Spirit, which transformed the disciples’ lives, is the same power that can transform our lives today!

There are many benefits to studying Acts:

- *Acts serves as a distant mirror.* We see the dynamics of the earliest church, the nature of their fellowship, the intensity of their prayer life and their out-and-out zeal to declare the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. Our own situation will be called into question. What does it mean to be the church today?
- *Acts emphasizes the primary task of the church—evangelization.* In Acts we see the entire process of calling, healing, empowering and sending people forth to love and obey Jesus Christ.
- *Acts calls us to a vital experience with the Holy Spirit.* The book of Acts reveals the Holy Spirit as the driving force behind all meaningful ministry in Jesus’ name.
- *Acts forges a new sense of identity.* The disciples gradually realized they were no longer Jews (at least from the confessional and ceremonial points of view). They slowly began to understand that they were part of that new community of the Spirit that was prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures. And they saw the need to

call all people—Jews and Gentiles—to repentance and fellowship with this new community, the church.

Through these studies by Phyllis J. Le Peau, the explosive power of this living document will touch you. As you work through these studies, may you experience the calling, healing, empowering and sending dynamic of the Holy Spirit.

Louis Quetel

SUGGESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

1. As you begin each study, pray that God will speak to you through his Word.
2. Read the introduction to the study and respond to the personal reflection question or exercise. This is designed to help you focus on God and on the theme of the study.
3. Each study deals with a particular passage—so that you can delve into the author’s meaning in that context. Read and reread the passage to be studied. The questions are written using the language of the New International Version, so you may wish to use that version of the Bible. The New Revised Standard Version is also recommended.
4. This is an inductive Bible study, designed to help you discover for yourself what Scripture is saying. The study includes three types of questions. *Observation* questions ask about the basic facts: who, what, when, where and how. *Interpretation* questions delve into the meaning of the passage. *Application* questions help you discover the implications of the text for growing in Christ. These three keys unlock the treasures of Scripture.
Write your answers to the questions in the spaces provided or in a personal journal. Writing can bring clarity and deeper understanding of yourself and of God’s Word.
5. It might be good to have a Bible dictionary handy. Use it to look up any unfamiliar words, names or places.
6. Use the prayer suggestion to guide you in thanking God for what you have learned and to pray about the applications that have come to mind.
7. You may want to go on to the suggestion under “Now or Later,” or you may want to use that idea for your next study.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF A GROUP STUDY

1. Come to the study prepared. Follow the suggestions for individual study mentioned above. You will find that careful preparation will greatly enrich your time spent in group discussion.
2. Be willing to participate in the discussion. The leader of your group will not be lecturing. Instead, he or she will be encouraging the members of the group to discuss what they have learned. The leader will be asking the questions that are found in this guide.
3. Stick to the topic being discussed. Your answers should be based on the verses which are the focus of the discussion and not on outside authorities such as commentaries or speakers. These studies focus on a particular passage of Scripture. Only rarely should you refer to other portions of the Bible. This allows for everyone to participate in in-depth study on equal ground.
4. Be sensitive to the other members of the group. Listen attentively when they describe what they have learned. You may be surprised by their insights! Each question assumes a variety of answers. Many questions do not have “right” answers, particularly questions that aim at meaning or application. Instead the questions push us to explore the passage more thoroughly.

When possible, link what you say to the comments of others. Also, be affirming whenever you can. This will encourage some of the more hesitant members of the group to participate.
5. Be careful not to dominate the discussion. We are sometimes so eager to express our thoughts that we leave too little opportunity for others to respond. By all means participate! But allow others to also.
6. Expect God to teach you through the passage being discussed and through the other members of the group. Pray that you will have an enjoyable and profitable time together, but also that as a result of the study you will find ways that you can take action individually and/or as a group.
7. Remember that anything said in the group is considered confidential and should not be discussed outside the group unless specific permission is given to do so.
8. If you are the group leader, you will find additional suggestions at the back of the guide.

THE CHARACTER OF EVANGELISM

Acts 13–14

I love evangelism, but I do not consider myself to be a “proclamation evangelist” who speaks the gospel to large groups. I love to lead small group investigative Bible discussions with people who are not believers. In fact I have been known to say, tongue-in-cheek, this is the only way that one can become a Christian. However, I was recently called upon to give a talk to a group of students who were, mostly, not yet Christians.

Just before leaving for campus that day, I spoke to a colleague on the phone. I said, “Pray for me. I am not giving a talk. I am going to preach.” The Holy Spirit gave me clarity and passion as I spoke about what it meant to be reconciled to God—to have your soul bought for God. Students responded by wanting to know more about Jesus.

The character of evangelism changed for me that day.

Group Discussion. Think of someone you know who effectively shares the gospel. What qualities do you see in that person?

Personal Reflection. What characteristics and qualities do you have that make sharing the gospel natural for you? What makes it difficult for you to share your faith?

Peter has disappeared, and Luke is ushering Paul to center stage. Peter, the apostle to the Jews, has played his part well and prepared the way for Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. In this study we will look at Paul’s first missionary journey, the beginning of his master plan of evangelism. We will also consider the personal qualities that made Paul effective in the task of evangelism. *Read Acts 13–14.*

1. As you look over these two chapters what qualities do you see in Paul and in Barnabas that made them effective in their ministry?

2. Which of these qualities do you want God to develop in you to make you more effective in communicating the gospel?

3. What role did the church of Antioch play in Paul's first missionary journey (13:1-3; 14:26-28)?

4. In missionary outreach, how do churches today compare and contrast with those of Antioch?

5. Review Paul's message in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch (13:16-41). What truths of the gospel are communicated?

6. How does Paul's message show sensitivity to his audience and the context?

7. In what relationships and situations do you need this same sensitivity?

8. List the different responses to the gospel (13:7-8, 13, 42-45, 48, 52; 14:1-5) that you see throughout this passage.

9. How did Paul respond to those who rejected the gospel (13:9-11, 46, 51)?

to those who believed (14:9-10, 21-23)?

10. In this passage the response to the gospel by the disciples was to be filled with “joy and the Holy Spirit” (13:52). How prevalent is this in the life of our church today? Explain.

11. People today are not apt to offer sacrifices to those who bring the good news of Jesus. However, in what ways are we faced with the temptation to be “god” in another’s life or to take credit for what God has done?

12. Based on how Paul and Barnabas responded to being seen as “gods,” how can we respond when this happens to us or when we are tempted to take credit for what God has done?



Pray about ways that God may want you to grow as a communicator of his good news.

NOW OR LATER

Write a psalm about God based on Acts 14:14-18. Let your heart and mind be free to be creative. Don’t be limited to the thoughts in this passage.

B U Y T H E B O O K !

ivpress.com/acts-13-28-lbs