

New Beginnings

Day One – Power

Today's reading: Page 389 through first break on page 397

This reading covers: Acts 1-5

Summary: When the Holy Spirit came, the world was changed.

Consider this:

Before ascending into heaven, Jesus told his disciples they would be his witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Can you image how impossible a task that must have seemed to a handful of people? What power would be behind their ability to carry out such a commission? Does witnessing for Christ seem overwhelming to you? How does knowing you have that same power (the Holy Spirit) change that? How did the Holy Spirit aid Peter and John as they spoke before the crowds and religious leaders? How can you contribute to instilling “Acts 2” vitality (devotion to teachings, fellowship, prayer and sharing) in your church?

For further reading: John 14:15-31; Galatians 5:16-26

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, I invite you into my heart. Convict me, intercede on my behalf, produce godly attributes in me, encourage, strengthen and empower me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day Two – Radical Conversion

Today's reading: Break on page 397 through break on page 401

This reading covers: Acts 6-9

Summary: Saul's life is radically changed when he meets Jesus.

Consider this:

To say that Saul was set in his ways before his conversion would be an understatement. Likewise, Ananias was certainly hesitant to reach out to someone known to be his enemy. But when God showed up, they listened and obeyed. Are you listening and obeying God's directive for your life? With God's help, is it really possible for a person to do a complete turnaround as Saul did?

For further reading: 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Timothy 1:12-17

Prayer:

Lord, I am astounded at your gift of grace -- how you run after even those who ignore you. Open my heart that I may hear your plan for my life and, like Saul, turn me around to be your servant. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Day Three – Message for All

Today's reading: Break on page 401 through end of chapter

This reading covers: Acts 10-12

Summary: Peter helps the early church learn an important lesson about the gospel.

Consider this:

Think about some cultural practices or beliefs that once were acceptable but now are taboo. Why did Jesus' disciples have to abandon old thinking? In what ways had Jesus already demonstrated he had come to redeem everyone? What is the only standard for inclusion into God's family? Compare the prejudice Jews showed towards Gentiles to modern day prejudices people hold. As a Christ-follower how do you defeat prejudices you might inwardly hold as well as make a stand against prejudices displayed by others?

For further reading: Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Prayer:

Father God, thank you for your love. Please keep my thoughts and actions free from anything that hurts or degrades others. In Jesus' name, Amen.