

## Introduction

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Welcome to Week 3! Our passage this week shows the early Church spreading out from Jerusalem, taking the Gospel into Judea and Samaria, and learning to count the cost of following Jesus. As we see the bold faith of Phillip, we can consider our own willingness to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in challenging times.

To get the most out of your group time, we invite you to look over the questions below and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group.

## Warm Up *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

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Here are some suggestions to get your conversation started:

1. What's the farthest trip you have taken from home? Share an experience that was unfamiliar or exciting.
2. Have you planted anything outdoors yet this Spring? What ups and downs of gardening can you share?

## Getting Started

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Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
    - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
    - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
    - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you
  - 2) Invite someone to read the passage in the group.
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## Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

- 1) In what ways did the message this week highlight our theme of “Daring to be the Church”?
- 2) Look back at Acts 1:8. **How does that command relate to what is happening in Acts 8:1-4? How do these Christians respond to the persecution that scattered them from their homes in Jerusalem?**

In all honesty, how might you have responded in that situation?

- 3) Read 1 Peter 3:13-17. **What actions steps are given in those verses?**

In your own words, how would you explain the best way to respond to persecution?

- 4) Just like a farmer plants seeds that multiply to produce a harvest, the image in this chapter is of God’s Spirit leading Christ-followers into places of influence to plant seeds of the Gospel that will multiply the Church. **What if God wants you to plant a Gospel-seed this week? How would you notice the Holy Spirit prompting you to share about your relationship with Jesus?**

**What can you draw from the story of Phillip in making yourself available to join God in the work of the Gospel that is happening right now?**

## Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

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Prayer opens us up to the leading of the Holy Spirit which makes it an important part of the Christian life. We realize that everyone has their own comfort level with group prayer, and we want this to be a time of safety and care. You may verbalize your prayer or pray silently to yourself; that way everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Some things to consider during prayer time:

- What did the message or group discussion cause you to notice about your relationship with Jesus?
- How can you express gratitude for what God's teaching you?
- What questions are stirring that only God can answer?
- Are there troubling things in your life that need to be confessed to God?
- Is there an unmet need that only God can fulfill?

## Personal Spiritual Exercises

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Each week we're suggesting a couple of spiritual exercises. These are not required, but they may help us to actively live our faith and grow as followers of Jesus. Feel free to practice one or both. If a certain exercise is helpful for you, we encourage you to find a way to incorporate it into your daily life.

***(Upward Look)*** Begin your day reading Psalm 103. Notice the characteristics of God; write them down, repeat them back to Him, or form them into a prayer of gratitude.

***(Inward Look)*** At the close of your day, find a quiet place and set aside 10-15 minutes to reflect on the activities, attitudes and emotions that shaped your day. Notice times that felt distant from God. What was happening around or within you to create that distance? Confess anything that comes to mind. Notice times that caused you to feel close to God or influenced by Him. Thank Him for His nearness.