

**Defensible Behavior**  
*Daring to Be the Church Series*  
**Acts 24:1-27**  
Pastor Bryan Clark

If Jesus were to return next week, what is it that you were involved in this week that would still matter? A lot of things matter but are we clear about what matters most? And is that how we're living our lives? That's what we want to talk about today. If you have a Bible, turn with us to Acts, Chapter 24, continuing our study of the book of Acts. Last week Jeff did a great job of advancing the story. Paul has now gone from Jerusalem to Caesarea, and now he's going to experience what we would call his third trial, but this one is going to be quite different. The first two were very religious in nature, and Paul responded accordingly. But this is now a civil trial before a Roman judge, so Paul's response is going to be quite different. We pick it up in verse 1:

**After five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders, with an attorney *named* Tertullus, and they brought charges to the governor against Paul. After *Paul* had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying to the *governor*, (\*NASB, Acts: 24:1-2a)**

Let's just go that far. So now they're in Caesarea. It's been five days, and it's time for a Roman trial. So let's define our characters here a little bit. Ananias is the high priest. He's very corrupt. As a matter of fact, many historians believe he was the most corrupt high priest Israel ever had. He's hungry for power from Rome and has little interest in caring for his people. Second is Tertullus. The name Tertullus was a very common Greek name. It's most likely he was a Hellenistic Jew, which meant he was Jewish, but spoke Greek. He's just basically a hired attorney and was probably hired because his heart was for the Jews, but he spoke Greek and understood the Roman court system. Third, then, would be the governor by the name of Felix. Felix was an interesting guy. He was actually born a slave, but he was friends with Claudius. Both he and his brother were friends with Claudius. As a result of that, Claudius' mom, who had a lot of power, freed him from slavery. When Claudius became emperor of Rome, then he's the one that assigned Felix to be governor of Judea. Felix was bloodthirsty; he was violent; he was oppressive. As a matter of fact, ancient historians would say that, more than any other governor, he was the one responsible for creating so much tension between the Jews and the Gentiles that ended up in the Jewish war about ten years later from this story, which then was just a bloodbath in Jerusalem. So, Felix was very oppressive. And then our last character is the Apostle Paul, who's also a Roman citizen, now being treated as a citizen in this trial. So this is standard procedure in a Roman court. It starts with the prosecution. The prosecutor starts with the expected flattery of the judge, and then moves into the charges.

**“Since we have through you attained much peace, and since by your providence reforms are being carried out for this nation, we acknowledge *this* in every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. But, that I may not weary you any further, I beg you to grant us, by your kindness, a brief hearing. For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the**

**Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. And he even tried to desecrate the temple; and then we arrested him. [We wanted to judge him according to our own Law. But Lysias the commander came along, and with much violence took him out of our hands, ordering his accusers to come before you.] By examining him yourself concerning all these matters you will be able to ascertain the things of which we accuse him.”** The Jews also joined in the attack, asserting that these things were so. (Vs. 2b-9)

So he opens with the expected flattery, none of which was true. As a matter of fact, the average Jew would have been deeply offended by what Tertullus just said. So this idea that he has brought peace, brought reforms, and they're so thankful for him—none of which was true—but that's just the way the game is played. As we'd say today, “Politics make for strange bedfellows,” and that's what you have here. Then he launches into basically three charges.

The first charge is that Paul is a **pest**. Now that seems like a bit of an odd charge to us, but the term actually isn't nearly that mild. It means an insurrectionist; it means he's a troublemaker. Just to put this in perspective, Felix had crucified many pests. One thing that Rome demanded of its governors is that they maintain order. The emperors of Rome hated any kind of conflict, riots, or insurrections in the empire. And if you as a governor couldn't stop it, you were out pretty quickly. So the idea of a pest is he's an insurrectionist; he's stirring up trouble. So Tertullus is thinking about what are the charges a Roman governor would hear. He has no interest in religious stuff, so he's framing this as civil matters.

The second is that he's a **ringleader of a sect called the Nazarenes**. This is the only time in the New Testament that Christians are called Nazarenes, but we do know from ancient history, that was a pretty common designation of the movement of Christianity. The idea of a sect implies division, and division implies conflict. So, it's a very similar charge. He's the ringleader, and this is a division, and this is going to cause conflict, and you better do something about it.

The third one is somewhat of a religious charge, and that is that he profaned or **desecrated the temple**. We talked about this two weeks ago. The charge was that Paul had brought a Gentile into the holy place where only Jews were allowed, and that's what really started the riot. The reality is that's not true, but that was the charge. Basically, what Tertullus is saying is that Rome gave us the authority when that happens, to deal with it. This was the only area where the Jews had been given authority to carry out a death sentence. So what Tertullus is saying is, “Felix, that is the power that you gave us, so we were just doing what we were told,” when Lysias, the commander, interfered with much violence and created a whole scene. And now we have to bring everything to you and waste your time for something we could have easily dealt with.” So that's basically the charge.

Now we have to remind ourselves that we learned last week that when the commander sent Paul to Caesarea, it included a letter describing what had happened. Tertullus failed to mention that it was just an angry mob, and there had been no trial. They were just beating Paul to death in the street. So Felix has read the letter and he's got the account from his Roman commander, and he's got the account from a Jewish attorney. It's fairly obvious which one he's going to believe. At this point, he has the option of either asking his own questions, making his own interrogation, or simply asking the accused to respond. Verse 10:

**When the governor had nodded for him to speak, Paul responded:**

**“Knowing that for many years you have been a judge to this nation, I cheerfully make my defense, since you can take note of the fact that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. Neither in the temple, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city *itself* did they find me carrying on a discussion with anyone or causing a riot. Nor can they prove to you *the charges* of which they now accuse me.”** (Vs. 10-13)

So Paul opens, basically saying, “You’ve been the governor over Judea for ten years now. I think you’re pretty clued into the corruption of what’s going on there.” So he’s quite confident that Felix actually knows what’s happening. Then he makes this defense. He starts by saying it’s only been *twelve days since he entered Jerusalem*. He had come back for the Feast of Pentecost in order to worship. He’s been in Caesarea for five days as the chapter opens, which means he could have only been in Jerusalem about a week. So he’s saying, “There’s no way in a week I could have organized some sort of insurrection. It’s not possible. In addition, every place I went, I tried to be respectful. I didn’t create conflict. I didn’t start a riot. I was trying really hard not to unnecessarily offend anyone.” And he adds, “There are no accusers here to say I did that.” Now in a Roman court, you couldn’t just bring a charge. There had to be accusers. There had to be eyewitnesses that would back up the charge. But if you showed up in a Roman court and made a false accusation, you were in real trouble. So it’s one thing for these people to yell false accusations out of a crowd but it’s very different to show up before Felix and make that charge in a Roman court. That’s what Paul is saying. “You can’t find one single person that will stand here and say that I created any kind of conflict among the people.”

**“But this I admit to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets; having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”** (Vs. 14-15)

So the second thing he says is, “It is true I am part of this movement called the Way. But this is not some sort of a sect; it’s not a division of what it means to be a Jew. It’s the opposite. It is the fulfillment of everything we’ve been hoping for.” He says, “What we believe is in perfect alignment with the Law and the Prophets. It goes all the way back to the hope of the promise given to Abraham.” It’s what sustained and kept these people alive and together now for hundreds of years. It was the belief that one day, through them, a Messiah would come and that would change everything. He reminds them that at the core of this is the belief that there will be a resurrection, a judgment of both the wicked and the dead. This is the whole point. That’s why there’s a Messiah. That’s why there’s a Savior. So Paul says this is the most Jewish of all movements, because we’re living the fulfillment of the promise of hope that has defined our people. Verse 16:

**In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience *both* before God and before men. Now after several years I came to bring alms to my nation and to present offerings; in which they found me *occupied* in the temple, having been purified, without *any* crowd or uproar. But *there were* some Jews from Asia—who ought to have been present before you and to make accusation, if they should have anything against me. Or else let these men themselves tell what misdeed**

**they found when I stood before the Council, other than for this one statement which I shouted out while standing among them, 'For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today.'**" (Vs. 16-21)

So Paul says that in view of the fulfillment of the promise, he seeks to live out this truth as a Jew. When he says in verse 16, **"I do my best"**, it's the Greek word that means *striving*. It's actually an athletic term. So you imagine an athlete that is disciplined, exercises, and does everything he or she can in order to get better and better. That's this term. "So now that I've experienced the hope of the Messiah, I'm striving harder and harder and harder to live in a way that reflects this truth." So he says, "When we got to Jerusalem, the first thing we did was we distributed this offering to the poor Jews that were part of the Jerusalem church." You remember, they collected the offering because there was a famine in Jerusalem, in order to distribute it to the Jews in the Jerusalem church that were suffering need.

Now think about this. If you're a Roman governor, you can't really ask for a better citizen than this. They're trying really hard to take care of the people that had significant need. He also says he went to the temple, but rather than profaning it, what he says is *he purified himself*. That actually is the antonym of *profane*, to *purify*. He's saying, "I bent over backwards to do what was necessary not to create conflict, not to offend them, not to create any trouble." But there were these Asian Jews. You remember, it was the legalistic Jews from Ephesus that had made the accusations against Paul. And once again he says, (I can imagine him looking around and saying) and "Where are they? If these are my accusers, by Roman law they are required to make their accusation in court, and I don't see any of them." So he essentially is saying, "What exactly is the charge?" The only thing he claims that he's guilty of was in the religious trial before the Sanhedrin, when he did yell out, **"For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today."** So he's asking Felix, "Is that the charge?" Verse 22:

**But Felix, having a more exact knowledge about the Way, put them off, saying, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case." Then he gave orders to the centurion for him to be kept in custody and yet have some freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from ministering to him.** (Vs. 22-23)

So, technically, as a Roman judge, at this point Paul should have been dismissed. There are no charges against him. But there's a problem. Because of so much conflict between the Jews and the Gentiles, the current emperor was Nero, and Nero had had it up to here with Felix. He was on thin ice. It's like, "One more time, and you're out." So Felix knows, "If I let Paul go, then these Jewish leaders are going to go to Rome. They're going to tell Nero, and I'm out!" So now he's stuck, and his decision is: no decision. It's a stalemate. So he puts Paul in prison but he allows him the freedom of visitors. Now we already learned that Phillip and his four daughters, who were prophetesses, and the church in Caesarea were all right there. So it's likely he had quite a few visitors that encouraged him and took care of him. But this stalemate would go on for two years with no decision made. Certainly he's waiting, hoping the Jewish leaders would forget about it, and they could quietly sneak Paul away in the dark of night. What happens in the final paragraph is actually quite fascinating if you understand the last chapters of the book of Acts as God giving Paul the opportunity to present the gospel to some of the most powerful people in that part of the world before he dies. This is a really interesting paragraph.

**But some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul and heard him *speak* about faith in Christ Jesus. But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, “Go away for the present, and when I find time, I will summon you.” At the same time too, he was hoping that money would be given him by Paul; therefore he also used to send for him quite often and converse with him. But after two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and wishing to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul imprisoned.”** (Vs. 24-27)

So apparently Felix is somewhat intrigued by Paul and his behavior, and the behavior of the people in the Way, as they were called, and he wants to have further conversation. So he invites Paul to talk to him and his wife Drusilla.

Now Drusilla is a very interesting character. Drusilla apparently was quite beautiful. When she was 14 years old, she married a Syrian king over a very small region. When she was 16, Felix talked her into divorcing her husband and marrying him, which she did. She would have been Felix's third wife. According to historians, she was lusting for power, and Felix was lusting for her, so they made this arrangement. Her history with Christianity is fascinating. So, Drusilla's grandfather was Herod the Great. So, Herod the Great is the Herod from the Christmas story that met with the Magi and killed all the babies. When he died, he was replaced by Herod Antipas, his son. That was the Herod that killed John the Baptist and was the Herod at the trial of Jesus. Then he was replaced by his brother, Herod Agrippa I. This is the Herod that arrested Peter and James. He put James to death, but Peter escaped. Herod Agrippa thinks he's God, and he's eaten by worms. The Herod that was eaten by worms is Drusilla's father. So in chapter 25, we're going to meet Herod Agrippa II with his sister Bernice along with Drusilla. They're all siblings. You kind of need a scorecard to follow all that, don't you? She has an amazing history with Christianity that's actually quite frightening.

So they ask Paul to talk about it some more, and the text says what he talked about was about faith in Christ Jesus—three areas: **righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come**. And the result of that is, Felix was terrified! Now, I'm going to imagine if your father was eaten by worms, it probably didn't sit well with Drusilla either. Some people take the position that Paul really laid it on him, like hellfire and brimstone. But that doesn't really make sense. That's not really how he conducted himself with Felix before. What makes more sense—and this is where I agree with theologian John Stott—is when it's *righteousness*, he's talking about the basis of justification: “Here's what it takes to be right before a holy God.” When he's talking about *self-control*, this is what it looks like, then, to live that out. And *judgment* is talking about why this matters. So, he talked about Jesus Christ. “Here's what's necessary to be right before God. This is, then, how we live as a result, and this is why it matters, because there is a judgment coming,” which then terrified them. So, he sends them away and apparently, over the next two years, from time to time, he would invite Paul to come back to talk about it some more, but also with a motive, hoping to get a bribe. It was not uncommon that prisoners like this would bring a bribe in order to gain release. Probably Felix thought that somewhere Paul had connections. He brought all this money to Jerusalem to distribute to the poor, so he must have connections, hoping that Paul would offer a bribe. Whether he would have released Paul or not, it's hard to say. But he did want the money. The chapter ends, understanding, for two years it's a stalemate. Ultimately, what happened is there was a major

conflict between the Jews and the Gentiles right there in Caesarea. Nero says, “That’s it. You’re out,” and replaces him with Festus. So the next trial of Paul will be before Festus, and we’ll talk about that next week.

As we wrap this up this morning, I want to spend just a little time thinking about Paul’s response to the Roman governor. This is a very different approach than his response before the Jewish Sanhedrin. Paul understood that a lot of religious talk would be meaningless to the governor, who could care less about that. But what he did care about is good citizens. So Paul presents himself as being a good citizen, what I’ve referred to as “*defensible behavior*”. Felix has to be thinking, “These are the kinds of people we want.” As a matter of fact, when the paragraph opens, it says that Felix was more knowledgeable about the Way. It’s saying he actually knew that the Christians were really good citizens. “They’re the kind of people we want in our community.” It’s interesting to think about our responsibility to live our lives in such a way that our lives give the message credibility. The goal is not just to be good for goods’ sake. Ultimately, we have to get people to Jesus, or we have failed in our mission. But in order for that to happen, we need to create an environment where people are open to listening, and often that has to do with our behavior in ways that make sense to them.

So let’s start by thinking about it collectively as a church. We don’t have any interest in being a church that sits on a hill, in the corner of town, and has no interest in our community. We’ve never been like that. As a matter of fact, we’ve worked really hard to be part of our community. We would like people to say, “We don’t really know what’s up with those Bereans, but we do think Lincoln’s a better place because they’re here.” The proverb says, “When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices.” That’s what we want. So, for years we have rolled up our sleeves—just like Jesus did when He walked on the earth—and cared about people in our community. Let me give you just a few examples.

We currently partner financially with 17 nonprofits. We have lots of people that serve in these ministries, but we also give a considerable amount of money to help these nonprofits that reach into our community, primarily to the needy and the disadvantaged, to the tune of about \$150,000 a year. In addition to that, there are about 20 nonprofits that we involve ourselves with in various ways. We, as a church, have adopted, I think it is, 36 teachers at McPhee Elementary School in order to serve them, in order to encourage them. Over this last year, we have delivered three significant loads of food, goodies, and refreshments to our hospitals and clinics as our way of saying, “We know you’re out there. We know this has been a tough time, and we just want you to know that we care.” We have been involved this year in providing practical needs such as beds for refugees that are resettling in our community. We have a whole car-care clinic that makes it possible for people that are struggling or disadvantaged to have reliable transportation, which in the city of Lincoln is very important. We had a serve day, and on the last serve day, over 400 people involved themselves in various projects around town. We have another one coming up April 9.

Several years ago, one of our senior leaders met with then Mayor Beutler. There were some things going on in our city and we just met to ask, “What can we do to help?” But it was very affirming that the first thing he affirmed is how much he appreciated, as the mayor, the many ways we, as a church, make our community better. That’s what we want. As a result of who we are as the people

of God, we want to be better business owners. We want to be better employers. We want to be better employees. We want to be better neighbors. We want to be better teachers. We want to be better students. We want to be better citizens. So think of it this way. What we want is for every environment where someone from Lincoln Berean is, that that environment is better because you're there. These are hard times. There's a lot of conflict. There's a lot of anger. There are a lot of problems. But what would it be like if thousands of people in all these environments all over our community made those environments better simply because you're there?

Now part of the challenge is that we have a media and politicians who are determined to divide us up into sides and keep the conflict going. It's very frustrating because it is destroying people's lives. And sadly, a lot of Christians get sucked into that. And rather than those environments being better, they're just contributing to the problem. One of the challenges we've had as a church, for those of us who speak, is some people want to interpret everything we say, through the grid of COVID. So it doesn't matter what you say, they're trying to figure out, "What?" "Wait a minute." "Did you say we should get the vaccine or shouldn't get the vaccine?" "Wait a minute, are you saying we should wear a mask or shouldn't wear a mask?" So just remember, there were lots of issues before COVID and there will be lots of issues after COVID. This is a difficult world.

Sadly, studies are showing many Christians today are choosing a church, not based on their theology, but rather on their politics. I just can't imagine how that grieves the heart of Jesus. I can say with great confidence, no one has stood on this stage over the last two years and told you what your opinion should be about vaccines or about masks. No one has! As a matter of fact, it's just not how we do business. Let me explain it this way.

The vision is that we come together in order to know Jesus, in order to become like Him. That's what we're doing. We would call it discipleship. As a result, as you grow in your relationship with Jesus and become like Him—this is where it gets really crazy radical—we actually trust you. We trust you to go out into whatever environment you're in, to follow your conscience, to follow the leading of the Spirit, and you decide how to rightly represent Jesus in the environment you're in. There are lots of issues. Now we're not talking about things that are clearly biblically defined. There are just lots of issues that aren't. And part of what we have to accept is there is going to be quite a diversity of opinion. And that's okay. As a matter of fact, it's one of the things I love about Lincoln Berean. There is great diversity here. We've worked really hard to make this a safe environment for anyone to walk through the doors and pursue Jesus. As a result of that, you have quite a diversity of opinion. Good Christians can disagree on a lot of issues. The church has never been about uniformity. It's about unity—and we're unified in the person of Christ. It's not helpful to cast judgment on another Christian because they don't see something exactly the same way you do. Here's how those conversations often go. "Now I'm not judging..." but the very next sentence out of their mouth is a judgment. I guess we think if we say that, it's a pass to be judgmental. It's like you are judging. It's possible to be really good Christians and not necessarily see everything the same way.

But there are two non-negotiables, where there is no wiggle room if we're going to be serious Christians. One is we must agree together that Jesus is the only hope of the world. I don't know how you could be a Christian and not understand that. And number two, our calling is to rightly represent Jesus in whatever environment we're in. There's no wiggle room there. There's no margin

for disagreement there. As the church, we may have differences of opinion on lots of things, but we must agree together that Jesus is the only hope of the world. And we are called as a church to rightly represent Jesus in every environment we're in. I can confidently say, if Jesus comes back next week, that's what matters most. There are lots of things that matter, but we can't lose sight of what ultimately matters most...if we're going to *Dare to Be the Church*.

*Father, we're thankful this morning that You've called us to be light, to represent Jesus to a dark and hurting world. Lord, You haven't called us to uniformity. Even the disciples didn't agree on everything. But you have called us to unity, together in Christ, to represent Jesus to the world. Lord, may that be so for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

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## WINTER 2022 // WEEK 5

### Life Group Questions

Acts: Daring To Be The Church// February 12/13, 2022

Defensible Behavior // Acts 24:1-27

## Introduction

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Chapter 24 finds Paul at the first of a series of trials at Caesarea Maritima that will eventually lead him to Rome. In this trial before the Procurator, Felix, Paul defends himself against accusations of instigating riots among Jews and desecrating the Temple. Paul skillfully shows these accusations are false. He argues that his actions did not create civil unrest. Furthermore, he demonstrates that his teachings and behavior are consistent with the Jewish Scriptures. Though Paul is not released from his imprisonment, his conduct rightly represents the gospel he proclaims. ***There are some great opportunities to put this week's passage into practice in the Personal Spiritual Exercises Section.***

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. Have you ever been accused of something serious that you did not do? Tell the group what that experience was like.
2. If you could sit down for coffee with the Apostle Paul, what one question would you ask him about his life?

## 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) What did this week's sermon force you to think hard about after you went home?
- 2) The High Priest and Tertullus make some serious, but clearly false, accusations against Paul. **How would you describe the tone of Paul's reply to these accusations?**

Think of a time when you were falsely accused. **What was the tone of your response? Was that tone helpful or counterproductive? Would you say your tone was consistent with the message of the gospel? If your tone was not consistent with the message of the gospel, how would you change the way you responded if another opportunity arises?**

- 3) In his defense, Paul pointed to his behavior among the Jews and in the Temple as one piece of evidence that the charges against him were false. **In accomplishing the mission God has given the Church, do you think the message of the gospel or the lifestyle of the message is more important? Give reasons for your answer.**
- 4) Because of the strong things Paul writes against those who want to force Gentiles to become Jews in order to be accepted by God (for example, *Galatians*), many wrongly assume Paul as being anti-Old Testament or anti-Judaism. **In his defense, why does Paul not distance himself from the Old Testament or Jewish practices?**

**What do you think Paul is saying about the relationship between Judaism and The Way?**

- 5) After the formal trial, Felix summoned Paul to hear him talk about what commitment to Jesus is all about (verses 24-26). As Paul explained this to him, Felix was afraid and shut Paul up. **What do you think stirred up fear in Felix?**

**Do you think the prospect of giving one's life to Jesus is always pleasant for someone to hear? Why or why not?**

- 6) Felix was not done with Paul. The text tells us that he kept sending for Paul to talk with him, though Felix's reason was that he hoped Paul would bribe him (probably to be released from imprisonment). Paul was a smart guy and undoubtedly knew why Felix requested him for conversation. **Why do you think Paul kept going back to talk to Felix?**

**Do you tend not to want to talk to people about Jesus who you know aren't really interested or might have suspicious motives for listening to you? Why or why not?**

## 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. **Next week in your Life Group, take a few moments to share how either of these exercises may have changed your outlook on your daily life.**

(1) **Life Reflection:** Each evening this week take some time to reflect on your behavior during the day—at work, during leisure time, at the store, at sports events, and even driving. Ask yourself if by your actions people would believe you are a follower of Jesus and find your message credible. If not, what changes do you need to make?

(2) **Reading the Old Testament:** In this week's passage Paul appealed to his commitment as a Christian to the Old Testament scriptures. Christians can become so focused on the New Testament that they neglect the Old Testament. Spend some time each day this week prayerfully reading from the Old Testament. Perhaps, choose an Old Testament book to read this week, or read a Psalm each day. Ask God to reveal Himself to you in fresh ways through your engagement with the Bible Jesus knew and used.