

## Study Guide





LifeLight

# LifeLight Expands

Available **NOW!**

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## LifeLight Foundations

Baptism  
 Bible Feasts  
 Creation, New Creation  
 The Christian's Mission

End Times  
 Heaven & Hell  
 Law & Gospel  
 Ministry

Miracles  
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 Prayer  
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Time between the  
 Testaments  
 Triune God  
 Worship

## A Step toward World Evangelization (Paul's First Mission Journey)

Distribute before session 1 for use in session 1.  
Use enrichment magazine pp. 2–4, 25.

### Acts 13–14

Use these resources for your daily study and the week's assembly.

#### Hymn

God, whose almighty word  
Chaos and darkness heard  
And took their flight:  
Hear us, we humbly pray,  
And where the Gospel day  
Sheds not its glorious ray,  
Let there be light!

Holy and blessed Three,  
Glorious Trinity,  
Wisdom, love, might!  
Boundless as ocean's tide,  
Rolling in fullest pride,  
Through the earth, far and wide,  
Let there be light!

*John Marriott, 1780–1825, alt.*

#### Prayer

Paul and Barnabas were sent on their mission journey after the church “fasted and prayed” (Acts 13:3). In each lesson of this course we will try a different posture of prayer. This week when you pray before each day's study, fold your hands and bow your head. Look at the crossed fingers of your folded hands and think about these words of Jesus: “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; ... If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you” (John 15:5–7).

**Pray:** Gracious Father, You gave Your Son to die for my sins and have called me to faith, forgiving me and giving me eternal life. Thank You. Keep me joined to You, and hear my prayers. Help me be concerned about those who do not know Jesus as their Savior and Lord. As You called and sent Paul and Barnabas, so give me a sense of calling to share Jesus with those I know and meet. Guide me and lead me by Your Spirit as I study Your Word and as I share that Word with others. In Jesus' precious name I pray. Amen.

#### Digging Deep

#### My Personal Study for Week 1

### Day 1 • Read Acts 13:1–12

1. Read Acts 1:8. On a map (most Bibles include a map of the Holy Land), locate each of the first three places Jesus mentions. The first 12 chapters of Acts tells us how the Gospel reached those first three places. The rest of the book begins the last stage of the progress Jesus outlines.

a. Which congregation, acting under the instruction of the Holy Spirit, called Paul as a missionary (13:1–3)?

b. What does 11:20–21 tell us about the people of this congregation?

2. Read the names of the five who are said to be prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch (13:1). Prophets spoke God's Word. Some prophets had revelations about things to come (as did Agabus in Acts 11:27–28). Read Acts 11:19–21, 25–26. What appears to be the main work of the five prophets at Antioch?

3. Barnabas and Saul received a special call to serve as missionary pastors. But then—and also now—the Holy Spirit calls upon *all* Christians to spread the Gospel. What encouragement and help for this task do we have?

1 Peter 3:15

Luke 12:11–12

4. Prayer and fasting (v. 3) were commonly practiced together in the early church. Fasting enabled believers to concentrate their attention on prayer and was a discipline imposed upon the body. What methods do you practice to maintain spiritual self-control and to concentrate on prayer and meditation upon God's Word?

5. Barnabas and Paul were headed for Asia Minor (today's Turkey), about 300 miles from Antioch. The most direct route would have been through Tarsus, in the southeast corner of the area, where Paul had lived for seven to eight years. Instead, they went by way of Cyprus, a Mediterranean island that was the home of Barnabas (Acts 4:36). Cyprus was a Roman senatorial province. On the basis of these facts, make a list of reasons why these missionaries might have chosen to go the Cyprus route rather than the Tarsus route.

6. After verse 9, Saul is referred to as Paul. *Saul* was a Hebrew name; *Paul* was a Roman name. *Saul* means "asked for" and *Paul* means "little." The name *Saul* would have been given on the eighth day, at circumcision. The name *Paul* may well have been given also as an infant, because he was born as a Roman citizen in the proud city of Tarsus, which had a special status in the Roman Empire. Considering the areas Paul traveled, why might the name *Paul* have been preferred on the mission journeys?

7. Luke reports only one conversion on Cyprus, although Paul and Barnabas were there for perhaps four or five months. Perhaps there were many conversions and many churches started. What impressed Sergius Paulus and led to his conversion (Acts 13:7–12)?

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**Day 2 • Read Acts 13:13–43**

8. Paul and Barnabas—with John Mark (12:25), Barnabas's cousin, as their helper—set out on their Spirit-directed mission journey. At Perga John Mark left them. No reason is given here. But what do we learn in Acts 15:37–39 about how Paul felt about John Mark's decision?

9. Nevertheless, despite this rocky start in their relationship, John Mark later became a close associate of both Paul (2 Timothy 4:11) and of Peter (1 Peter 5:13). Paul's reference to Barnabas in 1 Corinthians 9:6 leads us to believe that the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas was eventually resolved. What encouragement and example do you personally find in the way this disagreement was resolved?

10. Paul, as far as we know, did no work in Perga upon first reaching it, though he did preach the Gospel there as he and Barnabas were returning home (14:25). From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch, another 100 miles up the river, where there was a large Jewish population and a synagogue. What common strategy do you find Paul using in Salamis (13:5), Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14), and Iconium (14:1)? (In tomorrow's study we will consider the reason for this strategy.)

11. Remember that Paul was called and commissioned by Jesus to be His instrument to "carry My name before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15). How was Paul fulfilling this distinctive aspect of his calling even while approaching the Jewish synagogues first (Acts 13:16, 26, 43)?

12. Acts 13:15–41 presents us with a brief summary of Paul's sermon in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch. List the verses that you feel fit each of the parts of this sermon outline.

# Agreeing That All Nations Are Included (The Apostolic Council of Jerusalem)

Distribute before session 2 for use in session 2.  
Use enrichment magazine pp. 7–10.

## Acts 15

Use these resources for your daily study and the week’s assembly.

### Hymn

I love Your kingdom, Lord,  
The place of Your abode;  
The Church our blest Redeemer saved  
With His own precious blood.

I love Your Church, O God!  
Its walls before You stand,  
Dear as the apple of Your eye  
And graven on Your hand.

Beyond my highest joy  
I prize its heav’nly ways,  
Its sweet communion, solemn vows,  
Its hymns of love and praise.

*Timothy Dwight, 1752–1817, alt.*

### Prayer

Luke does not record the opening devotions nor the prayers that were spoken at the church council meeting recorded in this week’s reading, just as we don’t record our prayers in the minutes of our church meetings. The prayer posture this week focuses on agreeing together in prayer. If you do your lessons with another person, join hands and read Matthew 18:19–20 and the prayer before you do your lesson. If you do your lesson alone, hold the back of an empty chair with one hand and think of someone who is close to you as you read the Scripture and pray. (In addition, hold hands with your family as you say your meal prayer this week.) “If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there I am with them” (Matthew 18:19–20).

**Pray:** Thank You, gracious Father, for the fellowship of those who love You, who are brothers and sisters in Your family. Forgive the times I think only of myself, and touch my heart that I might be more sensitive to others and eager to share the Gospel with them. Speak to my heart through Your Word and

guide all my thoughts by Your Spirit, for I pray in Jesus’ precious name. Amen.

## Digging Deep

### My Personal Study for Week

#### Day 1 • Read Acts 15:1–11

1. This reading describes the assembly of the first church convention. Its purpose was to find a way to deal with a serious theological issue: whether the Gentiles who came to faith in Jesus had to accept the laws of Moses and be circumcised (vv. 1, 5). Other practices of the Old Testament covenant were Sabbath rest, sacrifices, kosher food, and such, but circumcision was the most important because it was the sign of the covenant (Genesis 17:10–11).

a. What other part of the old covenant was an issue when Peter went to the home of the Gentile Cornelius (Acts 11:3)?

b. God had promised a “new covenant.” How was this new covenant established?

Jeremiah 31:31

Hebrews 9:15

2. Who were the parties involved in the discussion of the circumcision issue?

a. Verses 1, 5

b. Verse 2

c. Verse 6

3. The “Jews” from Antioch who opposed Paul (Acts 14:19) were outside the church, but the “party of the Pharisees” (15:5) were believers and members of the church.

a. List the terms that are used in these verses for the followers of Jesus.

Acts 15:1–3

Acts 15:4

Acts 15:5, 23

Acts 15:10

b. What do these terms suggest about the attitude of the early believers toward one another?

4. a. Insisting on any requirement for salvation other than faith in Jesus destroys it. Read verses 8, 9, and 11 and state in your own words why we should accept persons of other cultures or color into the Christian faith.

b. How can you help make people of other cultures or color more welcome in your congregation?

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**Day 2 • Read Acts 15:12–21**

5. The real issue for Paul was always the conversion of the Gentiles, both on the road as he traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria and then in Jerusalem itself. Read again verses 3 and 12 to see the reaction of the church upon hearing the reports of Paul and Barnabas. How do you feel when someone, especially an adult, is baptized or confirmed in your church?

6. James is now the leader, or chief elder, of the Jerusalem church. See also Acts 21:18 and Galatians 2:9. Is this James the brother of John and the disciple of Jesus or is this James the brother of Jesus?

Acts 12:2

Galatians 1:19

7. The expansion of the Christian church to include Gentiles as well as Jews set the stage for an inevitable clash of cultures. The church in Jerusalem tried to be sensitive to the weaknesses of both the Gentiles and the Jews. Later, Paul dealt with the problem of offending the weak in two of his letters. What two main concerns are mentioned in these verses?

a. Romans 14:19–21

b. 1 Corinthians 8:7–8

8. **Challenge question.** The recommendation of James (v. 20) has four specific points. No reference is made to circumcision and the Levitical code since these are understood to be no longer required. Study the four recommendations:

a. “Abstain from food polluted by idols.” Compare verse 29 and 1 Corinthians 10:19–21. What does Paul say about food that has been sacrificed to idols?