

THE STORY

READ THE STORY. EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE.

AS YOU READ CHAPTER 28

Journal your answers to these questions as you read through the chapter this week. You may wish to read one day and journal the next, or spread the questions over the whole week.

1. Just 50 days earlier, Peter denied Christ and cowered in fear and shame. Now, in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost, we find Peter preaching in the first megachurch, facing down Jewish religious leaders and noticeably full of courage (p. 391-392). Describe the “new” Peter. How do you account for this change? When have you experienced this kind of power? And what prevents you from experiencing this kind of power?
2. Read Acts 2:44-45 (p. 392). The Christians were giving to those who had any kind of need. Notice that the Christians weren’t giving to each other because they felt the need to “give to the poor,” but because all the believers now viewed each other as family, and what else do you do with family but take care of each other? How does being brothers and sisters in Christ transform how you view others in need?
3. The early believers “enjoyed the favor of all the people” (p. 392) and “were highly regarded by the people” (p. 395). Yet, Peter and the apostles clearly stated they only cared about what God thought of them, not people (p. 396). What are the results when we strive to please people? Why is it that when we strive only to please God, others around us are transformed, too?
4. Cornelius and his household’s conversion dramatically changed the direction of the church. What began as a Jewish messianic movement would now cross ethnic barriers. Christians don’t lose their earthly identity (Jewish, Greek, American, etc.), but our earthly identity is intertwined and superseded by our heavenly identity. How is it a blessing and challenge that together all Christians are united in Christ’s body and yet mixed with a vast diversity of earthly identities?
5. The church grew rapidly from the beginning even in spite of growing opposition and persecution. What factors might account for such growth?
6. For most Christians, the Holy Spirit is the least understood person of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). List all you learned about the Holy Spirit from this chapter. What did you learn about the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for your own life?

PRAYER

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for not leaving me alone but giving the gift of your Holy Spirit that lives and breathes in me! Lord, let your Holy Spirit guide me in all that I say and do on a daily basis. Help me to find ways to share your saving message with others. Provide the guidance and confidence I need to witness to others about you. Amen.