

TO KNOW
HIM MORE:
SEEKING GOD
THROUGH
THE BOOK
OF ACTS

Kimberly Kirk

© Copyright 2004 ♥ Kimberly Coles Kirk
www.kimberlykirk.com

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This study is a journey through the book of Acts with the sole purpose of drawing us closer to God. It is so easy to approach His Word with the desire to know more about God but our longing should be to **know Him more**. We are warned in I Corinthians 8:1 that *knowledge puffs up, but love builds up*. As we grow in our relationship with God, our love for Him deepens and we are built up. If we pursue His Word for the sake of knowledge, we will become puffed up and filled with pride. As we walk with the Lord, we shouldn't be inflated but deflated as we see ourselves in comparison to Him. This does not mean that we should look down on ourselves and have low self-esteem, rather we should have a realistic view of who we are compared to Who God is. In regards to this, I believe John the Baptist said it best: *He {Jesus} must increase, but I must decrease* (John 3:30 - NKJ).

The theme verse for this study comes from the pen of Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

Philippians 3:7-8

May this be the prayer of our hearts and the driving force of our lives.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This workbook is designed to guide you through the book of Acts. I have used the New International Version of the Bible as my main text but have also consulted other versions. Each week has five lessons which you are to complete on your own. When we join together, I will teach a message that enhances the material covered in the workbook and then we will share and discuss the things the Lord has shown us through our study. Each lesson begins by asking you to read the passage for the day and then write down any insights, questions or comments that come to mind. **I believe this is the most important part of the workbook.** It is the time when each of us asks God to show us what *He* would have us see. God wants to speak to each of us individually and feed us directly from His hand (*Ps. 119:102*), but too often we skip this crucial step and just learn through the teachings of others. My prayer is that He will be your teacher and show you amazing things in His Word. I count it a privilege to share with you the things He has revealed to me.

PRAYERS ABOUND!!!

As I was preparing this study, the Lord burdened my heart to pray for those ladies who would choose to work through it. He gave me a different verse to pray over you for each week of lessons. I will share these verses at the beginning of each new week. I have also prayed these verses over myself as I sat before the Lord and wrote this study. Praying God's Word back to Him is powerful and I encourage you to cover yourself with these Scriptures as you walk through this workbook. May He receive all the glory for the fruit that He bears in our lives!

DISCLAIMER!!!

The one thing that has often frustrated me about Bible study workbooks is that at times, I have no idea what the author is asking! I would like to declare, here and now, that if that happens to you while you are working through this book, the problem is with me! Please don't get hung up on something and think less of yourself because you're not sure where I'm going. The reason something may not be clear is probably because I have not communicated it clearly. If this happens, just make a note of it and move on.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

I would like to encourage you to do something before you begin this workbook. It is always a good idea to get an overall view of a book of the Bible before we begin digging for the deeper truths. To this end, **I would ask you to read through the entire book of Acts before doing Lesson One.** Yes, I know it has twenty-eight

chapters but I also know that you can do this! You don't have to read it in one sitting, simply set your own pace and enjoy the journey. Once you have finished it, you will have a frame of reference for all the things the Lord will show us through this study. It will also give you a taste of the powerful yet imperfect people and the amazing miracles God performed in the first century church. But mostly, I believe that once you have read Acts from cover to cover, God will capture your heart and give you a hunger to continue studying this wondrous portion of His Word.

A FINAL WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

May these words bless you and vocalize the prayer of your heart.

MORE OF YOU

*I want more of You, more of Your passion and Your fire - I want knowing You to be my heart's only desire
As the deer pants after water, my soul thirsts after You
Transform me to Your image, refine and make me new*

*I want more of You, more of Your goodness and Your light
I want more of You, more of Your power and Your might
My heart desires a broader glimpse of Who You really are
A deeper understanding than I have gained this far*

*To know more of You, is the cry within my soul - Show me more of You, fill my life and make me whole
May Your sovereignty and mercy abound so I may see
So much more of You in me, I want more of You in me*

by Kimberly Coles Kirk, copyright © 2000, used with permission

SOURCES

All verses that are cited are taken from the New International Version of the Bible (*copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society*) unless otherwise noted. Other sources will be cited in the text as follows:

- (Strong's) Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary, copyright ©1994 Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.
- (Vines) Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers
- (Zodhiates) The Complete Word Study of the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates copyright © 1992, AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN 37422
- (Nelson) Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers (Unger) New Unger's Bible Dictionary, originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. Copyright © 1988
- (ISBE) International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright © 1996 by Biblesoft
- (Naves) Nave's Topical Bible, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1990 Biblesoft and Tristar Publishing
- (Barnes) Biblesoft Barnes' Notes, by Albert Barnes, DD., Electronic Database, copyright © 1997, Biblesoft
- (Wycliffe) The Wycliffe Commentary edited by Charles E. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison, Electronic Database, copyright © 1962 by Moody Press
- (Barclay) The Acts of the Apostles Revised Edition by William Barclay, Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Copyright © 1976
- (Henry) Matthew Henry's Commentary of the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database, copyright © 1991 by Henrickson Publishers, Inc.
- (Living) The Living Bible, copyright © 1971. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189
- (NJK) New King James Version, copyright © 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc.
- (NAS) New American Standard Bible, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, by The Lockman Foundation.
- (Webster) Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, copyright © 1972, G. & C. Merriam Company, Publishers, Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

THE HOLY SPIRIT QUIZ

Since the Holy Spirit is really the main Character in the Book of Acts, let's begin this study by determining how much we know about the third Person in the Trinity. Please read the following statements and write whether they are true or false.

1. ____ The Holy Spirit works independently.
2. ____ The Holy Spirit was there when the earth was created and was part of the process.
3. ____ While on earth, Jesus was led and empowered by the Spirit.
4. ____ The Holy Spirit is infinite and eternal (everlasting).
5. ____ The Spirit did not affect people in the Old Testament.
6. ____ The Holy Spirit has a personality.
7. ____ The Spirit indwells those who have accepted Christ and are saved.
8. ____ The Holy Spirit is everywhere at all times.
9. ____ The Spirit is the author of the Bible.
10. ____ The Holy Spirit directs but does not empower us to do things.
11. ____ The Holy Spirit is God.
12. ____ Being the Comforter and Counselor are the primary "jobs" of the Spirit.
13. ____ The Spirit is limited in His knowledge.
14. ____ Once the Spirit is in us, we in no way affect His ministry in and through our lives.
15. ____ The Holy Spirit is equal in nature and character to the Father and the Son.

You will find the answers and corresponding Scriptures at the end of Week 1. My Introductory Message is on the Holy Spirit so we will be getting to know Him even better before we begin our study.

**TO KNOW HIM MORE:
SEEKING GOD THROUGH THE BOOK OF ACTS**

WEEK 1: FINAL INSTRUCTIONS 10
Getting Started, Waiting on God, Pour on the Power, When Everything Comes Together, Putting it into Practice

WEEK 2: WALKING AND LEAPING AND PRAISING GOD 34
In Jesus' Name, Ignorance, By What Power Do You Do This?, Anatomy of a Prayer, Motivation for Giving

WEEK 3: SERVING IN YOUR STRENGTH 55
Cheating God, No Time to Hide, A Losing Battle, A Familiar Strategy, The Ultimate Price

WEEK 4: A NEW CALLING 77
Doing it the Hard Way, Counterfeit, To Listen and Obey, Winning Men Over, Miracles Abound

WEEK 5: A MIRACULOUS ESCAPE 100
Messages From God, Extended Family, Explanations, Spreading Like Wildfire, Death of a King

WEEK 6: MISPLACED EXCITEMENT 119
Traveling Men, Looking Back, Moving Forward, Divided We Fall, Strengthening and Equipping

WEEK 7: NOT WHAT YOU MIGHT THINK 140
Additional Requirements?, Lessening the Load, Changing Partners, Freedom and Bondage, Injustice Revealed

WEEK 8: THE UNKNOWN GOD 159
Guilty By Association, A Study in Contrasts, For the Sake of Knowledge, A Word of Encouragement, Incomplete Knowledge

WEEK 9: HOLY FEAR 179
Far and Wide, Taking Matters Into Your Own Hands, There's Just No Stopping Them!, Finishing the Race, Letting Go

WEEK 10: STRONG WARNINGS 201
All Things to All Men, False Accusations, Honoring the Powers That Be, An Effective Distraction, A Watchful Eye

WEEK 11: RIDING THE STORM 221
In the Courtroom, Too Much To Handle, Appealing to a Higher Authority, Wisdom in Counsel, A Royal Audience

WEEK 12: GOD'S PROVISION 245
True and Reasonable, Disaster Ahead, Surviving the Storm, Final Destination, Bold to the End

Week One
FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

I am so glad that you have decided to join me on this journey! I know the Lord will bless us as we invest ourselves in Him and in His Word. The dividends are boundless and eternal!

This week we will walk through the opening events of the first century church. We will hear Christ's parting words, witness His ascension and wait with the apostles for the arrival of the promised Holy Spirit. We will then experience God's mighty power on the Day of Pentecost and see amazing changes in the lives of those who surrender themselves to Christ and put His Word into practice.

As I prepared each week of lessons, the Lord gave me a verse to pray over all of the ladies who would choose to walk this path with me. I have also prayed these verses over myself. The one He gave me for this first week comes from Ephesians:

*I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you
the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.
Ephesians 1:17*

I encourage you to ask the Lord to give you His Spirit of wisdom and revelation as you work through this week's lessons, and pray that the end result will be that you will draw closer to Him and truly know Him better.

Before we get started with Lesson 1, I would like to share an amazing blessing the Lord bestowed upon me. When I began writing this study, I asked certain ladies to pray for me. I did not tell them about the prompting from the Lord to pray specific verses as I prepared the lessons. One day, one of these precious friends called me and asked me how things were going. She then told me that the Lord had given her a verse to pray for me in regards to this curriculum. It was Ephesians 1:17. Only God could have orchestrated that! It was such an encouragement to me and was God's way of letting me know that I was right where He wanted me to be. That is the *only* place I *ever* want to be!

May He speak to our hearts through His Word and bless us beyond measure.

Lesson One ~ *Getting Started*
Lesson Two ~ *Waiting on God*
Lesson Three ~ *Pour on the Power*
Lesson Four ~ *When Everything Comes Together*
Lesson Five ~ *Putting it into Practice*

Week One, Lesson One
GETTING STARTED

As we begin our journey through the Book of Acts, we will first put things into context and then dive into the Scriptures. I hope you are ready because here we go...

WHERE TO BEGIN?

I trust that you have taken my suggestion and read through the entire Book of Acts and that the Lord has already blessed you through it. I guess it is always best to begin at the beginning. Any time we approach the study of a book of the Bible, it is important to start with some background information on the book itself, the author and the main characters. This will give us an overall framework within which we can place the nuggets of truth we collect along the way. With that in mind, let us take a few minutes to introduce ourselves to the Book of Acts ...

THE BOOK

This book is called “Acts” which is short for the “Acts of the Apostles.” It has also been referred to as the “Acts of the Holy Spirit” since His Name is mentioned nearly sixty times and it is His appearance and empowerment that allows the events recorded here to unfold. I like to call it the “Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles” that way, we cover all the bases! This book is an historical account of the first century church that primarily addresses the ministries of Peter and Paul. It covers an approximate time span of thirty-two years that begins with the Ascension of Christ (about 30 A.D.) and ends with Paul’s imprisonment in Rome (about 62 A.D.).

THE AUTHOR

The Book of Acts was written by Luke who also penned the gospel that bears his name. He was a Gentile (Col. 4:11-14) and is thus distinguished as likely being the only non-Jewish author of the New Testament. He was an historian who carefully investigated things before writing about them (Luke 1:1-4). He was a medical doctor (Col. 4:14) who accompanied Paul on his missionary tour of Asia and Macedonia (Acts 16:10-13;20:5-6), to Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-8) and to Rome (Acts 27, 28, II Tim. 4:11, Philemon 1:24). For these events, he gives an eyewitness account. He also had ample access to Paul to gain details of things he did not experience firsthand. In addition, he had a wide circle of contacts as can be seen by the ninety-five different persons from thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine Mediterranean islands that he mentions in the Book of Acts (Nelson). It is believed that he was Paul’s personal physician as well as being a missionary doctor. He was the only one who stood by Paul during his second imprisonment in Rome (II Tim. 4:11). According to Nelson, *Luke apparently was a humble man, with no desire to sound his own horn. More than one-fourth of the New Testament comes from his pen, but not once does he mention himself by name.*

THE KEY PLAYERS

The Holy Spirit ~ The main character in the Book of Acts is the Holy Spirit. Since my introductory message will revolve around the Holy Spirit, I will only outline the basics here. God exists in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. That means that the Spirit is God and, thus, any attribute or characteristic that one would apply to God the Father, can be said of the Spirit as well (i.e. omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, etc.). The Spirit has always existed and will never cease to exist, however His interaction with mankind changed dramatically. In the Old Testament and in the gospels, the Spirit would come upon certain people at certain times for specific purposes and then would leave. After Christ’s victory over the grave, the veil was torn and we were given full access to God! Praise the Lord!! At Christ’s ascension, He told His disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit which would come upon them. Ten days later, on the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit came with power and miracles and has never left! That same Spirit that filled the apostles as recorded in Acts chapter two is available to all who bend their knee to Jesus. Once He has taken up residence in our hearts, He will never leave us! Keep in mind that as Believers, we who have turned our lives over to Christ are inhabited by the Spirit of God, the Creator of the universe, the Author of the Scriptures! May we approach His Word with boldness, expecting to receive from His hand all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3)!

Peter ~ How can we describe such a larger than life character? Throughout the Book of Acts, we will see this once overbearing, impetuous, prideful man become a powerful tool in the Master’s hand. In the gospels, Jesus calls Peter the rock - in Acts, he fulfills that prophecy. He was a fisherman, called by Christ to be a “fisher of men” (Matt. 4:18-19). He had the boldness to ask, and the faith, at least temporarily, to walk on water (Matt. 14:28-29). He cut off a servant’s ear in an attempt to defend Jesus (Jn. 18:10), and soon after, denied Him three times (Luke 22:34). He was the most prominent of the twelve apostles and he can be seen as a man of firsts: first disciple called (Mk. 1:16-18), first to be named apostle (Mk. 3:14-16), first to profess that Jesus was the Christ (Matt. 16:13-17), first apostle to see the risen Lord (I Cor. 15:3-5), first to speak to the crowds at Pentecost (Acts 2:1 & 14), and first apostle to proclaim salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1- 48).

Paul ~ I believe the best way to describe Paul is through his own words: *circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for legalistic righteousness, faultless* (Phil. 3:5-6). He was also a Roman citizen (Acts 22:27) and was thoroughly trained in Jewish law by the highly respected teacher, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Pretty impressive, don’t you think? Paul didn’t think so! Again, in his own words: *But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ ...*(Phil.3:7-8). We will learn much more about Paul as we walk through the Book of Acts.

SOURCES:

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers
New Unger's Bible Dictionary, originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. 1988.
International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database 1996 by Biblesoft
Nave's Topical Bible

DIVING IN

Now that we have a little bit of background on the Book of Acts and its main characters, it is time to approach the Scriptures themselves. Oddly enough, we will not begin in Acts. At this point, you may be wondering just what you have signed up for! Let me assure you that we will be studying through the Book of Acts but today, I would like to start at the end of Luke’s “former book” (Acts 1:1).

Passage for Today: LUKE 24:36-53

Please read the passage and share any insights, questions, comments or anything that comes to your mind regarding it. This will be our practice in each lesson. We need to read and digest the Word and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal things to us first. I will then share with you the things God has shown me. It will be helpful in our times of discussion if you note the verse of each insight or comment.

PUTTING THINGS IN CONTEXT *(Luke 24:36)*

The first thing that jumped out to me was wondering what the “this” or “these things” were that they were talking about (Luke 24:36)! To figure it out, I simply glanced at the preceding passage and determined that

they had been discussing Christ's appearance to two of them on the road to Emmaus. We can often discover the context within which a passage is written if we look at the verses around it.

Why is it important to understand the context of a passage we are studying?

We need to know what is going on in the passage so that we have the proper backdrop within which to place our text. It allows us to look at the verses within the framework they were written which helps us more accurately study and understand them. Taking Scriptures out of context can be very dangerous so let's commit to taking a few extra minutes to read around any individual verses or passages the Lord leads us to in our times with Him.

I would like to go back a little further to properly set the scene. Christ's followers had just endured the arrest and crucifixion of their leader, their friend, their Master. At the tomb, they realized that Jesus' body was gone and were told by angels that He had risen. He then appeared to Mary Magdalene and other women but when they reported this, the disciples did not believe them. Next, we have Christ's appearance to Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus. That brings us to our passage for today.

AN UNEXPECTED GUEST (*Luke 24:37*)

These men were standing around discussing how Christ had appeared, in the flesh, to two of their own. I wonder if they believed Cleopas and his unnamed companion? Were they hanging on their every word as they described their encounter with the risen Lord or were they trying to explain it away, thinking it was nonsensical as they had done with the women? Whatever the case, they were definitely talking about it! I can't even begin to imagine their reaction when the very One of Whom they spoke stood before them! The text says that they were startled and frightened - I should say so! But their fear was the result of their misinterpretation of what they saw. Jesus stood before them and yet they thought it was a ghost.

As they were talking about that journey down the road to Emmaus, I wonder if they were wishing that they had been there, that they could see and talk with Jesus again. And there He was - but they did not recognize Him. Do we do that? Are there times when He is standing beside us yet we don't recognize Him? I know that I can answer, "yes" to that. Jesus is always with us. He is always at work in our lives. He always extends His grace and peace to us. Why are there times when we don't see Him?

Take a moment and write down some personal and general reasons why we often do not recognize Jesus or His presence in our lives.

I would like to suggest a few reasons...

1. ***We are not looking for Him.*** I believe one explanation why we don't see Christ's footprints is because we are not looking for them. This can be the result of not spending time with Him in His Word and through prayer. When we are not in fellowship with our Heavenly Father, we often don't recognize His voice or His presence.
2. ***We do not acknowledge things as being from God.*** Everything we have is from God but how often do we think about that? Sometimes, I fear we lose sight of how He provides for us physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. This mindset can be the result of pride or an ungrateful spirit. It is so easy for us to just expect the things that come our way, or feel as if somehow we deserve them. This self sufficient attitude keeps us from seeing that all things come to us from God's hand.
3. ***He comes in ways we do not expect.*** At those precious times when we are walking closely with God and we have surrendered our pride and truly have a thankful heart, it is still possible for us to not recognize

Jesus' presence in certain areas of our life. I believe this is because He often comes in ways we don't expect. Perhaps He has moved in a specific way in the past and we anticipate a similar response in the future. Or maybe our view of Him is just too narrow to see Him beyond the scope of our current understanding. The Lord clearly illustrated this principle to me through a Scripture that He brought along my path. After the Old Testament prophet Elijah scored a great victory for the Lord in a showdown between God and Baal, he had to flee for his life. This is his encounter with God:

♥ **I Kings 19:11-12** *The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.*

Do we always expect God to come in a powerful way, one that shakes our entire world or do we listen to His gentle whisper to our hearts? God shows Himself in our lives in many ways but if we are only looking for the overtly dramatic ones, we will miss the quiet evidences of His presence as we walk through each day.

Before we move on, I would us to take a minute and reflect on the things above. If the Lord is showing you that you are not walking with Him as you should, confess it to Him. If He is exposing a prideful or ungrateful spirit, lay it at His feet. If your expectations of Him are keeping you from recognizing Him, take it to the throne. There is such freedom when God shows us where we have gotten off the path and we are able to confess and repent. Now, let each of us ask the Lord to open the eyes of our heart so that we can see His presence, power, provision and purpose in and for our lives.

Please write a prayer of confession (if necessary) and recommitment to the Lord. I encourage you to date it so that you can look back and know that this was the day when you committed these things to God.

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! (Luke 24:38-43)

Jesus stood before them and they did not recognize Him. I love His response! Instead of rebuking them, He offers proof to confirm that it is He. Isn't that just like Jesus? He wanted them to receive Him and He made it as easy as possible. He gave them what they needed to see Him. Their first response was fear because they didn't recognize Him. Once He showed them His hands and feet, they still didn't believe but it was for a different reason: joy and amazement or wonder! Their fear turned into "it's too good to be true!" Unfortunately, the result was the same - they did not believe.

I am sure we all struggle with unbelief at times. Share some things in your own life that you have a hard time believing God wants to bestow on you because they seem "too good to be true."

I don't know about your list but mine starts with salvation. When I first heard the Good News of the gospel, that Jesus paid a price I couldn't pay and all I had to do was accept it, I had a hard time believing it (Rom. 10:9-10). It seemed too good to be true. His promise to always be with me no matter where I go or what I do - that's a tough one for me to grasp (Ps. 139:7-10; Deut. 31:8). That God desires to teach me directly from His hand through His Spirit (Ps. 119:102) is another one that seems too wonderful. And II Timothy 2:13 absolutely blows me away: *if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.* Add to that how He

calls us His children (John 1:12), His workmanship created to do His work (Eph. 2:10), a part of His royal priesthood (I Peter 2:9) and there are so many more! These are all truths. Just because they seem too good to be true doesn't mean they are. God interacts with us and describes us in these ways. All we need to do is take Him at His Word. *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God* (II Cor. 1:20).

Another proof Christ offers is a bit more indirect - He eats some food in their presence. I'm pretty sure that ghosts don't eat! This was His way of showing them that He had been bodily resurrected (see Luke 22:14-16). He then reminds them of the things He said to them when He was alive. What happens next is truly life changing for these men: *Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures* (Luke 24:45). Throughout the gospels, He spoke to His disciples over and over again yet they never really got it - now we know why. Up to this moment, the prophecy from Isaiah 6:9 that God's people would *'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving'* reigned. Try as they might, the disciples truly could not see because their eyes had not yet been opened. Now they were. Suddenly, it all made sense.

Have there been times in your life when in a very real sense, the Lord opened your mind so you could understand the Scriptures? If so, please record them here. If not, please write a prayer to God asking Him to do this in your life.

PARTING WORDS *(Luke 24:44-53)*

In the last section of our text, Christ reiterates things that He had been telling His disciples all along and then tells them what is to come: that they will be His witnesses and tell His story. He also assures them that they will be endowed with supernatural power from on high to accomplish this task and fulfill this calling. Christ blesses them and then ascends before their eyes. How amazing that must have been! What was their response? They were filled with joy and praised God!

Why do you think this was their reaction? Why weren't they sad that He was leaving them?

These men who didn't want Jesus to leave were now rejoicing in His departure! Why? I believe it is because they finally got it! For the first time, things regarding Christ were clear to them. Their eyes had been opened and they could see the big picture. They finally understood why Jesus had come and that His death and ascension were all part of the plan. They were also beginning to get a glimpse of the part God would have them play. There is such joy and excitement when God sets a task before us and then promises to provide what we need to accomplish it, and with that comes praise. God speaks to us in the same way today. He wants to reveal His will and specific plan for each of us and He has already empowered us with His Holy Spirit. So what is getting in our way? Let us boldly approach the throne of grace and ask God to give us eyes to see and ears to hear what He wants to impart to us. Then, with joy and excitement, let's praise Him and wait with anticipation as He does miraculous things in and through us, for His glory.

You have worked so hard today! I know we covered quite a bit of territory but I pray that you were blessed and that the Lord showed you wonderful things in His Word (Ps 119:18). This lesson is a little longer and less interactive than most because of the background information so please don't feel overwhelmed. I pray that He seals the truths to your heart that He showed you today. See you tomorrow!