



New Testament Survey

Sid Buzzell

www.odbu.org

Group Exercises: Leader Guide

Welcome to Our Daily Bread University's (ODBU) New Testament survey course. In this course, ODBU provides the content of the New Testament survey through lectures and related study materials. On the days when you meet with the students who are participating in the course, you, as the students' leader, will encourage them to interact meaningfully with the content they have already taken in. The purpose of this guide is to provide you with some ideas for activities and exercises that will challenge the students to engage and interact with the teaching.

These exercises and activities have been provided to us by Dr. Sid Buzzell, former Chairman of the Theology Department at Colorado Christian University. He used ODBU's course content in his teaching of both Old and New Testament survey to hundreds of college students each year. The suggestions he makes in this guide have already been tried in classrooms and proven to be successful teaching/learning tools. You now can benefit from his creative thinking and from his experience.

In addition to using Dr. Buzzell's materials, we want to encourage you to think of some exercises that will be unique to your personality and teaching style. Here are some general ideas of types of activities you might develop:

- 1. Provide additional information on the Bible book or topic you are discussing with your students. As you view the ODBU lessons the students are completing, you may think of additional information that you want to cover in your meetings using a short discussion. Feel free to add material as you desire, but keep in mind that you should allow time for students to interact with each other and, with your oversight and involvement, to engage with and apply the information they are learning.**
- 2. Discussion. Some topics lend themselves to open discussion on a particular topic led by the teacher. Often these discussions can be initiated by questions the students may have as they study the biblical text.**
- 3. Small-group discussion. You might break the group of students into smaller learning teams to discuss and/or debate on one of the topics or to share with one another their own exegesis and application of a passage or question.**
- 4. Case studies/problem-solving groups. You might give students a problem to solve or an example (fictional or actual) that will encourage discussion and application of the concepts taught in the lesson.**

Be creative and innovative. This kind of teaching is an opportunity to try new ideas, which will encourage students to be actively involved in learning. By the time they meet with the group, you know they have taken in the course material. In the group meetings, the real assimilation of the material begins, and there is almost no limit on ways in which that engagement with the text can occur. So enjoy this course as you use the activities in this guide and as you develop your own style of interacting with students that will encourage their lifelong study of the Bible.

NT222 Acts: Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Proclamation

222:3 Acts: The Early Church Explodes On the Scene

Discussion and Biblical Study: Acts 1 and 2

Ask students to read these passages, talk about what each teaches, and relate the teaching to our lives today:

Acts 1:1-3 – The gospel was “realized.” Focus on the statement in verse 3, “He presented Himself alive.” The discouraged and frightened apostles were transformed by this event.

Acts 1:4–2:4 – The apostles were prepared. The Spirit came.

Acts 2:12-35 – The gospel was preached. Peter, as the apostles’ leader, clearly made Christ’s claims known to a hostile Jewish audience.

Acts 2:37-41 – The gospel’s power and truth were affirmed. Three thousand believed this amazing message. It was working!

Have students discuss their answers in groups and then lead in a full-group discussion.

222:4 Acts: The Church that Refused to Stop Growing

Discussion: Three Pictures of the Church

One of the following three passages from Acts will be assigned to your group. Read the passage carefully and make a list of at least 10 observations concerning it. Then meet with the others in your group and discuss observations and interpretation: What is the plain, normal meaning of each passage?

Acts 2:41-47: 41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. 44 And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; 45 and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. 46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 5:17-42: 17 But the high priest rose up, along with all his associates and they were filled with jealousy. 18 They . . . put the apostles in a public jail. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and . . . said, 20 “Go . . . speak to the people in the temple the whole message of this Life.” 21 [So] they entered the temple . . . and began to teach. 25 [Then] someone . . . reported to the high priest, “The men whom you put in prison are . . . in the temple . . . teaching the

people!” 26 [So] the captain [of the guard] brought [the apostles] before the Council. The high priest 28 said, “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching.” 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. . . .” 40 [So] they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them. 41 [The apostles] went on their way . . . rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. 42 And every day . . . they kept right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Acts 6:1-7: 1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. 2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” 5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. 6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. 7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

Discussion: Loved for . . . What?

The New Testament church is built on the idea of *koinonea*—intimate fellowship, caring, helping, sharing, nurturing, and loving. But the first step in receiving what we need in our struggles is to admit to ourselves and to others that we are actually in need. For some, the most difficult part of hard times is the admission that we need help. If we pray to God for help, His response is often, “I will help you in the way I designed—through My church, the body of Christ. Let My people help you.” And, as Ronald Rolheiser explains, that is where we hit our first obstacle to receiving God’s help. He wrote,

The road to love and intimacy lies in a compassion born out of the perception of shared struggle and shared fear. When we genuinely see another’s wound and struggle, then the other enters a deeper, more real, part of us.

But it is precisely here that the problem lies. More than anything else, we struggle not to reveal our pain and fears to others, for we have been falsely taught that community and love are grounded upon something else, namely upon impressing each other. Perhaps the greatest obstacle to intimacy and community is that propensity to believe that others will love us only when we are impressive and strong.

Because of this, we go through life trying to impress others into liking us. Rather than sharing ourselves as we really are—vulnerable, tender, struggling, full of fear— we try to be so sensational that there can be no possible reason not to love us (Ronald Rolheiser, *Among the Lilies*, p. 239).

1. In a short paragraph, summarize Rolheiser’s point.
2. How does that resonate with you intellectually? Do you agree or disagree?
3. How does that resonate with you behaviorally? How open are you to asking others for help?