

WE SACRIFICE OUR PERSONAL FREEDOMS FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL

YEAR: KNEEL / FOCUS: LIVING ON MISSION / SERIES: ACTS

BIG TRUTH: WE SACRIFICE OUR PERSONAL FREEDOMS FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL

1 Corinthians 9:20-23; 10:28; 1 Thessalonians 1:5

BIBLE VERSE: ACTS 21:23-24

"Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law."

BIG IDEAS

- We have an obligation to live for peace and mutual upbuilding.
- We have an obligation to live for our neighbors' good.
- We have an obligation to live in unity.

BIBLE PASSAGE: ACTS 21:17-26; ROMANS 14:1-15:7

KNEEL: LIVING ON MISSION

The Kneel Year is an exploration of what it means to worship God with our all (Luke 10:26-28) and to use our influence to lead others to do the same. We know that as we pursue a life of worship, we will pursue a life of both wisdom and mission. Throughout this year we will study and pursue the wisdom of God through the book of Proverbs and the mission of God through the book of Acts, and we will learn how both of these things must inform and shape our influence as Jesus followers!

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know...

- The gospel has the power to turn the world upside down.
- They are empowered and chosen to be a gospel witness in the world.
- Our salvation has come by grace alone.



Every student should feel...

- Comfort that the Lord is with them wherever they go.
- Hope in the God of salvation.
- Responsible to use their influence to live for Jesus alone.



Every student should strive to...

- Read, study, and meditate on the entire book of Acts.
- Memorize the Bible verse each week.
- Pray consistently for boldness to make Jesus known.



Every student should want...

- To pursue faithfulness in living on mission.
- To share the gospel with people in their lives who do not know Jesus.
- To sacrifice their personal freedoms for the sake of the gospel

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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"Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads."

- When a believer lives on mission, it requires giving up his or her personal desires. This doesn't mean that we never do anything we desire or want, but it does mean that we weigh our desires and pursuits against bringing God glory.
- Living on mission means that the focus of our lives isn't fulfilling our desires. Instead, it is expanding the Kingdom of God. To do this, we will put others above ourselves.

Believers live on mission by giving up their personal needs.

"...take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads."

- Living on mission requires giving up our personal needs. This also doesn't mean that we go without all the time, but it does mean that there will be times when we sacrifice our personal needs for the sake of the mission.
- It means that we put others before ourselves and consider their needs more important than our own. We will do things that meet the needs of others before meeting our own needs. This is what it looks like to live on mission for Christ.

Believers live on mission by sacrificing for others.

"Thus, all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law."

- As believers, we will sacrifice for others. We will give up things we love and refrain from doing things so that others receive the truth of the Gospel. We will participate in things with others to help them along in their spiritual journey.
- Often, the sacrifice required for the sake of others will be our time. We will need to give up our time for the sake of others' spiritual growth. As believers, we will need to spend our lives in community with others and this takes our time.

WE SACRIFICE OUR PERSONAL FREEDOMS FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL

BIG IDEA #1: WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO LIVE FOR PEACE AND MUTUAL UPBUILDING.¹

[THIS]

When Paul traveled to Jerusalem, he visited with fellow Jewish believers there and relayed to them what God had done through him as he ministered to the Gentiles. During Paul's ministry to the Gentiles, rumors had begun that Paul was teaching Jews to ignore the customs and not to circumcise their children. To keep peace and to build up fellow believers, the Jewish believers in Jerusalem asked Paul to participate in the vow that four men were currently observing. They asked Paul to purify himself with them and to pay their expenses. Their request seems odd to us, but considering their customs and the traditions, for Paul to be known as someone asking people to forsake Jewish customs would have caused people to stumble in their faith. Paul's participation in the vow with these four men would show the doubting Jewish people that the rumors about Paul were not true. Paul could have declined, but instead, he agreed to participate in the vow with the men. By doing so, he was choosing peace and mutual upbuilding for the Jerusalem church. As believers, we are all called to do this.

[THEREFORE]

Read Acts 21:17-26. How are Paul's actions countercultural to what the world today would say a person should do?

Paul chose to sacrifice for the sake of others. He chose to set aside his own freedoms for the sake of the spread of the Gospel. Our culture teaches that we should do what makes us happy, not what makes others happy or helps them in their spiritual walk.

[THIS]

Living for peace and mutual upbuilding requires our reliance upon God's Word and the Holy Spirit inside of us. These are not natural to our flesh natures. We do not naturally seek peace or the upbuilding of others over ourselves. To put others first, we must first know Christ as our Savior and have the Holy Spirit inside of us. Romans 14:12-19 shows us that with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can live in a way that is peace-seeking and builds up the body of Christ. In this passage, Paul exhorts the Roman believers to live in a way that doesn't cause other believers to stumble in their faith. There are things that we are free to do as followers of Christ, but we should not do them if they would cause another believer to struggle in his or her spiritual journey. Before we take any action, we should consider how our actions will affect the body and if they will not promote peace and build up the body, then we should not do them. As followers of Jesus, we should desire peace in the body and we should want to see the body grow together.

[THEREFORE]

How have you benefited from other believers seeking peace and the mutual upbuilding of the body of Christ?

Ephesians 4:16 shows us that the body of believers is to build itself up by investing in one another and building one another up spiritually. Titus 2:3-5 gives us an example of the type of investment and discipleship that can and should happen within the body of Christ.

What obstacles make it challenging for you to pursue peace in the body?

Our lack of self-control keeps us from pursuing peace. When we lose our tempers or we lose focus, we do not seek the mutual upbuilding of the body. Proverbs 16:32 and 25:28 remind us of the importance of self-control to our spiritual walks.

1. Romans 14:19: Believers are called to live for peace and what brings mutual growth to the community of believers.

WE SACRIFICE OUR PERSONAL FREEDOMS FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL

BIG IDEA #2: WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO LIVE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS' GOOD.²

[THIS]

In Acts 21:17-26, Paul did not have to take the vow the four men were taking. He did not have to pay their expenses or sacrifice in anyway, but he did so for the good of his neighbors. As a believer, Paul set the good of his neighbor above himself. He chose to live for the sake of others over living for himself because this is the example that Jesus set. Paul had just returned from a ministry to the Gentiles and the Jewish believers rejoiced with him, yet there were still rumors circulating about Paul. He could have just defended himself and denied the rumors. Instead, he considered his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and humbled himself to participate in the vow and purify himself. This cost him time and resources, but it promoted peace and benefitted the body of Christ in Jerusalem. Paul had an obligation to live for his neighbors' good and not for his own. This obligation came because Christ died on the cross for our sake. We follow Christ's example when we live for the good of others.

[THEREFORE]

Why do we struggle with obligations to others? How does a right view of our relationship to Jesus help us fulfill our obligation to our fellow believers?

Galatians 3:13-15, 1 Corinthians 6:20, and Colossians 1:14 remind us that we are bought with a price. Jesus paid for our sin debt. His sacrifice for us obligates us to love Him by loving others.

[THIS]

Having an obligation to our neighbors is not something we do merely to be in good standing with God. We feel the compulsion to care for our neighbors and to consider their needs above our own because of what Jesus has done for us. This is part of the transformation that occurs in us. As we grow in our spiritual walk, we grow in our understanding of who God is and what He has done for us. This helps us understand ourselves and the great debt we owe. This produces a love in us for Christ that then is poured out in a care and desire to meet the needs of others. Just as Paul desired to care for the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers, we will desire to care for our neighbors. We will want to put their needs above our own. We will live for their good, setting aside our own desires and wants for their sake.

[THEREFORE]

How does your relationship with Jesus help you consider others' needs above your own?

Romans 12:10 and 1 Corinthians 10:24 teach us that we are to count others as more important than ourselves. The more we know Jesus and grow in our relationship with Him, the more we will consider others as more important than ourselves. Jesus shows us how to do this, so the more intimate our relationship with Him is, the more we will count others' needs above our own.

How does the battle against our flesh nature tempt us to ignore others' needs?

1 Peter 2:11-12 shows us that our old flesh is at war with our new self. Our old self can tempt us to ignore the needs of others. When this happens, we may be tempted to put ourselves first and not seek peace in the body of believers.

2. Romans 15:1-2: We are obligated as believers to bear with our fellow believers.

WE SACRIFICE OUR PERSONAL FREEDOMS FOR THE SAKE OF THE GOSPEL

BIG IDEA #3: WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO LIVE IN UNITY.³

[THIS]

In Romans 14:1-15:7, Paul writes to the Roman believers teaching them how to live in peace and harmony with one another. The obligation that believers should feel for one another is to seek harmony. In our flesh nature, this is impossible. With the help of the Holy Spirit, believers can live in harmony. As Paul exhibits by his example in Acts 21:17-26, the Spirit enables us to submit to one another in love. This means we will give up what we desire. We will give up our freedoms, desires, and even our needs for the sake of others and keeping the peace within the body. Paul did not insist on proving he was right when he was visiting the church in Jerusalem. Instead, he gave up his rights and submitted to what would bring about peace and harmony to the body. This is the obligation that every believer should feel within the body of Christ.

[THEREFORE]

Read Romans 15:1-5. How do Paul's instructions to the Roman believers help you understand how to live in unity?

Paul explains in his letter to the Roman believers how to live in harmony. He explains the importance of those believers who are stronger submitting to those who are weaker so that the weaker may grow in their spiritual walk. This enables harmony and unity to remain within the body of Christ.

[THIS]

God does not ask of His people anything He does not equip them to do. He has given His people His Spirit to enable them to pursue harmony and to live in unity. In our flesh it is difficult to submit our will to another. It is hard to give up our opinions and our rights. In the Spirit, it is easy to set aside our opinions and to allow another to be right while we submit to what is best for them. This is what brings God the most glory. When we live in unity with one another. God commands His people to be peace-keepers and peace-seekers. It's not enough for us to desire unity; we must seek it. We must work toward it. We must set aside our own freedoms and desire to make sure there is unity. It is important that God's church is unified so that His mission continues. Not because God needs the church to fulfill His mission, but because it is what is best for His people and it is His will that His church fulfill His mission.

[THEREFORE]

What are some desires and opinions that you need to set aside to pursue unity?

1 Corinthians 1:10 and 1 Peter 3:8 show us the importance of seeking unity within the body of Christ. To do this, we must set aside our desire to be right or to be heard. We must choose to hear others and to even be misunderstood at times. We also must choose to not share all of our opinions. When we choose unity over ourselves, we choose to die to sharing every thought or idea we have.

When the body of Christ is unified, how does it fulfill the mission of Christ better?

Romans 15:6 tells us that when the body of Christ is unified, we glorify God with one voice. God commands and calls us to unity. This unity shows the world around us that the Spirit is at work in us. This brings God glory and makes Him known in the world, fulfilling His mission through His people.

3. Romans 15:5: All believers are called to live in harmony with one another.