

CALLED TO BE A WITNESS (Leader's Guide)

Acts 1:1-11

OPENING QUESTION

Today we are going to unpack the command Jesus gives to his disciples to spread the Gospel message. We will be looking at what God is calling them to and also, how He will empower them to fulfill that calling. Can you think of a time you knew you were being called to do something? Give us a 30-second description of that calling and describe how you felt in the moment you knew you were being called.

CONTEXT

The book of Acts can be summarized as the Holy Spirit empowering believers to spread the Gospel message far and wide. The book was written by Luke as a sequel to the Gospel of Luke. Acts repeatedly emphasizes that the suffering Jesus endured, His death on the cross, and His resurrection fulfilled His promises and Old Testament prophecies (Lk. 24:6, 25–27; 44–47). We begin our study of Acts in the first chapter as Luke describes a conversation between Jesus and His disciples right before Jesus ascended to heaven.

READ ACTS 1:1-11

DISCUSS

1. Look at verse 4. What did Jesus command them to do? Why couldn't they begin spreading the word of the kingdom of God immediately? What did Jesus mean by "the promise of the Father"?

Leader Note	<i>He tells them to wait for the Holy Spirit to come. This is important because they will need the Holy Spirit to do what he will call them to do, which is to spread the Gospel message all over the world. The Holy Spirit will give them the right words to say, give them courage, boldness, confidence, insight, ability, and authority.</i>
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2. How do the disciples respond to what Jesus says in verse 4? Why is this important to note?

Leader Note	<i>There is no response from the disciples. They instead ask a different question. It appears they are indifferent to what Jesus is telling them and only concerned about when Jesus will restore the kingdom to Israel.</i>
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3. As eyewitnesses to the resurrected Jesus, the apostles' hopes for Him to restore Israel as an independent and powerful nation are renewed. How does Jesus redirect their attention and call them to be focused on something else? [verses 7–8]

Leader Note	<i>Jesus says it is not their concern when He completes God's reign and doesn't answer their questions about the restoration of the nation of Israel. Instead, He calls them to share what He did and show others how He lived.</i>
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4. What is the scope of the disciple's assignment (1:8)? What was Jerusalem, Samaria and the ends of the earth to them? If this occurred in your town or campus, what places could be substituted for those in verse 8?

Leader Note	<i>There are a couple of ways to think about this. Jerusalem might represent their department. Samaria could represent their campus. And the ends of the earth could represent everything outside the University. Jerusalem might be their town, Samaria their country, and the ends of the earth their whole world.</i>
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5. Picture yourself as one of Jesus' followers as Jesus rises from earth to heaven (vv. 9–11). What do you see, hear, think, feel, say, and do?
6. What difference might the angel's promise of Jesus' return make in how His followers approach their assignment? How might the angel's words in verse 11 speak to us? What do they encourage us to think about and do?

Leader Note	<i>We should be ready for Jesus' sudden return (1 Thess. 5:2), not standing around "looking into the sky", but by working hard to</i>
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	<i>share the Gospel so that others can share in God's blessings and know Him.</i>
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REFLECT

1. Jesus redirects them from wanting to know about restoring the kingdom of Israel to telling them about the gift of the Holy Spirit and the mission He is calling them to. Can you think of a time when God has redirected you, like the disciples, from your plans to being on mission with Him?
2. Jesus first called His disciples to Jerusalem, which was the city around them. God has brought you to this University for this season in your life. It can often be very scary to be a Christian and to share your faith in the world of academia. How might you be a witness in your department and amongst other graduate students and/or faculty in this season?

PRAY

Leader Note	<i>Tell your group you want to spend a few minutes of your prayer time thanking God for entrusting them to share His message with others and asking God for help doing that. Then tell them you will transition them to sharing their fears about this with Jesus and inviting Him to help them. Before you start, encourage them to ask the Holy Spirit for help with the specific ways they want to be a witness while in graduate school or as a faculty member.</i>
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