

HOW CHURCH WORKS

"HOW TO BE" ACTS 5:12-16

This Week's Core Competency

Giving Away My Life – I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes. Romans 12:1 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*

Ironically, sometimes our language obscures the meaning we intend to express. This is particularly true of religious language. When we talk about things pertaining to our faith, we often use familiar expressions that are used by other Christians or that "sound" sacred. Because the words are familiar or have a certain "ring," we seldom stop to clarify precisely what we mean by them. "I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes," is this kind of expression. It begs the question, "How exactly do I give away my life?" There are statements like this in Scripture, too—statements that must be clarified before we can act on them. We hear Jesus say, "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it," and wonder what he means? We read, "Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God," and wonder what to do. We should continue to use this kind of language,

The frontiers of the kingdom of God were never advanced by men and women of caution.

— J. Oswald Sanders

but we should use it thoughtfully and listen to it more carefully.

It seems that these statements carry the same type of message. Live in obedience to God. Live missionally. That is how we give away our lives, how we lose our lives for Jesus and the gospel, how we offer ourselves as living sacrifices to God. I obey God's will for my life rather than go my own way. I partner with God in the accomplishment of his mission on earth. For some obedience is *coincidental*. God, however, calls us to *premeditated* obedience and missional living.

Romans 6:15-23 says the same thing in different words. According to Paul, people are slaves to whatever or whomever they choose to obey. We were once slaves to sin but we have been set free—not to do as we please but to be slaves to righteousness. Paul talks in the following terms: choose to sin and be a slave to sin, or choose to obey God and be a slave to righteousness. There appears to be no middle ground. Joshua put it this way centuries ago: "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve (or obey)." Then he set an example for us to follow by saying, "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord" (Jos 24:15). Because righteousness is his will for us, Paul can say that choosing to obey God makes us slaves to *righteousness* (v. 18) as well as slaves to *God* (v. 22). I give away my life by living in radical obedience to God's will—by living in obedience to God's Word—by living missionally. Peter puts it this way: "Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy

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in all you do; live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear" (1Pe 1:15, 17). The book of Acts gives us the example of the apostles and the early Christians who did this very thing.

For Discussion

Talk about *everyday* ways *everyday* Christians can live on mission.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

Acts 5:12-16

Cf. another translation

12 The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. 13 No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. 14 Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. 15 As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. 16 Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed. (NIV(c)1984)

12 Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. 13 None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. 14 And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 15 so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. 16 The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. (ESV)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "apostles" in v. 12.
- * Bracket "signs and wonders" in v. 12.
- * Circle "the people" in vv. 12, 13, 14, 15.
- * Circle "all the believers" in v. 12.
- * Bracket "Solomon's Colonnade" in v. 12.
- * Circle "no one else" in v. 13.
- * Underline "dared" in v. 13.
- * Circle "them" and "they" in v. 13.
- * Box "nevertheless" indicating *contrast* in v. 14.
- * Bracket "believed in the Lord" in v. 14.
- * Box "as a result" indicating *result* in v. 15.
- * Underline "Peter's shadow" in v. 15.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Who is doing *what* according to verse 12a, and *why*?
2. Verse 12b (lit., "they all") refers to either all the *believers* or all the *apostles*. What do you think, and what difference does it make?
3. What made Solomon's Colonnade a strategic place to meet?
4. Identify "no one else," "them," and "they," in verse 13.
5. Luke's use of "dared" in verse 13 is fitting. How so? (Cf., v. 11)
6. Explain the *contrast* in verse 14.
7. What do you infer about Peter from verse 15?
8. Explain the *significance* of any parallels that you see between Peter's ministry (vv. 15, 16) and Jesus' earlier ministry (cf., Mk 3:7-12; 6:53-56).
9. **Discussion:** Talk about *who* was behind the healing and exorcisms in this passage and *why* it mattered.

"Acts falls naturally into two divisions: the mission of the Jerusalem church (chaps. 1-12) and the mission of Paul (chaps. 13-28). Each of these may be subdivided into two main parts. In the Jerusalem portion chaps. 1-5 treat the early church in Jerusalem; chaps. 6-12, the outreach beyond Jerusalem. In the Pauline portion 13:1-21:16 relates the three major missions of Paul; 21:27-28:31 deals with Paul's defense of his ministry" (John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, 72). Along the way, Luke punctuates his account with "progress reports" that summarize the advance and growth of the church to that point. Although commentators disagree as to their exact number, Acts 5:12-16 likely contains the *third* such report—the first two occurring in 2:42-47 and 4:32-35 (162; Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT, 229).

This third report documents the ministry of the apostles, particularly Peter, in Jerusalem and its results, and in doing so it explains why the high priest and his officials, all Sadducees, arrested them and put them in jail (vv. 17, 18). According to Luke, all of the apostles were performing "miraculous signs and wonders" in Solomon's Colonnade, but when crowds from the towns around Jerusalem later gathered with their sick and demon possessed, it was Peter they were looking for (vv. 15, 16). He was the apostles' spokesman and leader from the beginning and the one who had recently healed a crippled beggar in Solomon's Colonnade (3:6-10). Even if he didn't touch them, they hoped his shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by and heal them. Luke doesn't say whether people were healed this way or not. However, "Acts 19:12 has Paul working with handkerchiefs, healing from a distance, like Jesus in Luke 7:1-10. There also is healing by touching Jesus's garment in Luke 8:43-44" (Bock, 232).

Apparently, the apostles met in the outer court

of the temple regularly to tell people that according to their own prophets, Christ had to die and be raised from the dead, and to tell them that Jesus whom they killed was alive (vv. 11-26). The very fact that they were doing the same signs and wonders he had done during his earthly ministry (cf., Mk 3:7-12; 6:53-56) proved as much—for Jesus was actually the one performing miracles through them. Luke suggested this in the opening words of Acts. "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus *began* to do and to teach" (1:1) implying that Jesus' work continued in Acts through his own personal interventions and the ministry of the apostles. That being the case, he must be the Christ. Perhaps, contrary to the NIV's translation, none of the other believers joined the apostles given that "great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about" the incident involving Ananias and Sapphira (v. 11). In any case, the apostles were highly regarded by the Jewish people and many of them, both men and women, believed in the Lord.

In a nutshell, "This summary gives a glimpse of the divine power working through the apostles. People are being healed. Outsiders are impressed. People believe. Apparently, the prospect of arrest also keeps some believers from joining the apostles. Nevertheless, the bold apostles engage publicly in their ministry of service to those in need and gain respect and response as a result. They do not cloister themselves away or hide. They continue to serve and reach out in ministry that testifies to their message and God's call for all. The growth of attention demands a renewed response from the Jewish leadership" (233). Luke continues to document the advance and growth of the church to further assure Theophilus and other readers of Luke/Acts that the things they had been taught were certainly true (Lk 1:4).

The Message of the Passage

Jesus continued to do signs and wonders in Jerusalem through the apostles, confirming that he was truly the Christ and causing many more men and women to believe in him.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about what God wants you to know . . .

–Write about how God wants you to feel . . .

–Write about what God wants you to do . . .

“How to Be”

(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 12 **apostles** I.e., the eleven and newly elected Matthias (Ac 1:26). Peter is clearly the spokesman for the apostles and the leader of the early church (cf., 1:15-22; 2:14-41; 3:1-26; 4:1-21; 5:3-11).
- v. 12 **signs and wonders** God authenticated Jesus by the signs and wonders done by him (4:22). God continues to authenticate Jesus by the signs and wonders done now by the apostles in Jesus' name (4:30; cf., 14:3; 15:12). Put differently, Jesus continues to do through his apostles what he did during his earthly ministry, thereby confirming that God raised him from the dead (2:24). "The phrase many signs and wonders is a repetition of 2:43, where in summary form Luke mentions the work done by the apostles. With the word people the writer has in mind the people of Israel. The residents of Jerusalem observed the healing power demonstrated in the wonders the apostles performed" (Simon J. Kistemaker, *Acts*, NTC, 191). "These miracles signified who Jesus really was (signs), and they filled the people with awe (wonders)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Acts," 93, www.soniclight.com).
- v. 12 **the people** I.e., the Jewish people. "This term is especially frequent in Acts 2:47-6:12 and plays a role in a significant development. In 2:47 we are told that the Jerusalem Christians were viewed favorably by 'all the people.' This favor continues. When the temple authorities begin to oppose the apostles, they are unable to act effectively because the apostles enjoy the people's support (4:21; 5:13, 26). The situation mirrors the passion story, where the people support Jesus as he teaches in the temple and prevent the authorities from taking action against him (Luke 19:47-48; 20:19, 26; 21:38; 22:2). In Acts the people are a fertile field for the Christian mission, yet, just as in the passion story they are fickle and easily swayed by false charges. A first indication of change is found in the Stephen story. Opponents are finally able to arouse the people by false charges against Stephen (6:11-14)" (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 2:59, 60).
- v. 12 **all the believers** Lit., "they . . . all;" cf., "they were all together in Solomon's portico" (ESV; cf., NET, NRSV, NKJV, NEB, NJB). Commentators are divided regarding who is meant. "Although the reference to 'all' in the verse might be to Christians, given the reference to 'together' (homothymadon; 1:14; 2:46, 4:24) and verse 13, where 'the rest' and 'them' are in contrast (Barrett 1994: 274; Pohill 1992: 163), it is more natural to read it as reference to the apostles, whose ministry is the passage's focus of description and reaction (Johnson 1992: 95; Fitzmyer 1998: 328)" (Bock, 230). "This has the advantage of solving the seeming contradiction between vv. 13-14, where no one dared join the Christians, yet many new converts were added. It, however, raises the rather serious question of why the other Christians wouldn't join the apostles in Solomon's Colonnade . . . It is probably best, and the most likely reading, to follow the NIV" (Polhill, 163).
- v. 12 **Solomon's Colonnade** Cf., Jn 10:23; Ac 3:11. The outer court of Herod's temple, the court of the Gentiles, was surrounded by a high wall. Along the inside of the wall on all four sides were porticoes, covered walkways with roofs of cedar supported on marble columns. Solomon's Colonnade or Porch ran along the east side of the outer court and rested on a massive wall rising up from the floor of the Kidron Valley (see Wikipedia, s.v. "Second Temple"). On the height of the wall one author writes: "The height of the wall varied, but on the exterior to the south it extended more than thirty meters above ground level (Sanders, *Judaism*, 68). In some places, the actual height of the wall is fifty meters, because the foundation is twenty meters below street level (M. ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple*, 77, 92). (Josephus says that the actual height of the wall in some places was as high as 300 cubits (= c. 150 meters), but this seems to be in error; he is correct, however, in noting in general that, 'The whole depth of the foundations was not apparent; for they filled up a considerable part of the ravines, wishing to level the narrow alleys of the town' [War, 5.188].) On the top of the outer wall, there was probably a parapet on either side, in order to allow people safe access to the top of the wall" (Barry D. Smith, "The Temple in Second-Temple Judaism," <http://www.abu.nb.ca/courses/newtestament/hebrews/Temple.htm>).
- v. 13 **no one else** If verse 12b refers to the apostles, then "no one else" means "none of the other Christians." Perhaps "these believers hesitate to join with them in this temple ministry given the hostile view and actions of the Jewish leadership, as well as the fear the apostles' access to judgment generated" (Bock, 231); "them" and "they" refer to the apostles. If verse 12b refers to "all the believers," then "no one else" means "the people" who were awed by the power of the apostles and who heard about Ananias and Sapphira. "They did not run up and join the Christian band in the colonnade but kept a healthy distance. Nevertheless, they held the Christians in the highest regard" (Polhill, 163); "them" and "they" refer to the apostles and the other Christians. "The 'rest' (Gr. *hoi loipoi*) were probably the unbelieving Jews. Other possibilities are that they were the apostles, other Christians, or other Jerusalemites. They steered clear of the Christians because of the Jewish leaders' opposition (4:18) and the apostles' power (vv. 1-10). The 'people' (Gr. *ho laos*), the responsive Jews, honored the believers" (Constable, 93; cf., Kistemaker, 191, 92).
- v. 14 **believed in the Lord** Cf., "added to the Lord" (ESV, NKJV). Perhaps the NIV is preferable (Kistemaker, 192).
- v. 15 **Peter's shadow** Cf., Lk 8:44. "In the ancient world a person's shadow was the subject of much superstition and was believed to represent his or her power and personality, to literally be an extension of their person. Whether or not they were healed by Peter's shadow Luke did not explicitly say, but the note underlines the strength of the apostle's healing reputation" (Polhill, 164; Bock, 232).
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Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

This week my family will be heading to Kentucky on a mission trip. Several months ago when we were thinking about what we might do over Spring Break, several options were on the table. Do we plan a vacation? Is this a good week to go visit some out of town friends? Do we stay home, tackle some projects around the house and have a mandatory pajama day? When some friends invited us to Kentucky to serve in one of the most poverty-stricken counties in the nation we politely said "no thank you." Despite all the travel and hard work the trip requires, it's not even spring in Kentucky yet! It even snowed this week! But the Holy Spirit began working in our hearts and we heard him say, "Go ahead, give your week away." Our core competency this week is Giving Away my Life - I give away my life to help with God's work. In our text, we see the result of the apostles' giving their lives away - God added to His church. The body of Christ enlarged because his people chose to serve Him instead of their own pursuits. What can your family do? It might as simple as committing to pray for your neighbors every day this week. You might decide to take a mission trip this year. Maybe you could devote one day of spring break to serve someone else. Be ready to watch God move when you decide to give it up for Him!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Acts 5:12-16

1. What does the passage say the apostles were busy doing?
2. In verse 14, what happened as a result?
3. According to verse 16, how many were healed?

What Do You Think

1. Why do you think people thought very highly of the apostles?
2. God used Peter to heal people who were sick. List some ways that God uses the church to help people in our world today.

What R U Going To Do

You have been doing a great job writing down things you have done to serve others on your *Scrolls*. Have a conversation with your family and decide on something you can do to give away your life to help with God's work this week and then write it down on your *Scrolls* so we can all celebrate!

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Giving Away My Life - I give away my life to help with God's work.

Memory Verses

Acts 2:42-47

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC ____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.