



HomeGroup **LEADER'S** Discussion Questions  
Week 3: Sep 27-Oct 3

**PICK 2-3 QUESTIONS BELOW** (maybe one from each section) **THAT YOU THINK WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR YOUR DISCUSSION. THE BRIEF INTRODUCTION BELOW IS ONLY A SUGGESTION OF WHAT YOU COULD SAY TO INITIATE THE DISCUSSION.**

What kind of life should a Jesus-follower expect to have? One of ease and free of opposition? Maybe one that's accepted or even admired by everyone watching? If you have a pulse, you know that's not the case! The Bible speaks of real consequences for those who follow Jesus. In one sense, it is the safest place on earth; on the other hand, though, it is a place where we should expect trouble. One question we want to land on today is *how can we encourage and strengthen each other when trouble comes?*

**MAIN TEXT:** Acts 14

**CONNECT**

1. True or false? Christians I know have faced trials or suffered because of their faith. *This could lead to good discussion regardless of how people answer. The key point to emphasize is suffering "because of their faith."*

2. Multiple Choice: What comes to mind when you hear that Christ-followers should expect to face trouble or difficulties because of their faith?

- A. Let's change the subject!
- B. I feel guilty for having a relatively easy life.
- C. I feel terrified because of what it could mean for my life.
- D. I don't believe it's true for me.
- E. Something else: \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank)

*Feel free to ask this as a simple question rather than a multiple choice. If people typically don't look at copies of these questions since it will be difficult for most to remember the different options.*

**LEARN**

3. Overall, how do Paul and Barnabas respond to the persecution and suffering they face in this chapter?

*In Iconium (vv. 1-7), they stayed in spite of opposition but fled once an attempt was made to physically harm them.*

In Lystra (vv. 8-20), they stayed until Paul was stoned and left for dead.

4. Where is God while Paul and Barnabas are being opposed? From the text, where do you see Him being either active or absent while Paul and Barnabas are facing persecution?

In the face of opposition in Iconium, "a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed," and God was "granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands."

In Lystra, God performed the miraculous healing of the man and He preserved Paul's life as he was being stoned.

In Derbe (v. 21), God raised up many disciples through Paul and Barnabas.

5. What do you notice about Paul's explanation of the gospel in verses 15-18? According to Pastor Thomas, why doesn't Paul start by explaining what Jesus has done?

The people of Lystra were pagans who were unaware of who the one true God is and what had done. Paul had to start "further back" to set the stage for talking about Jesus.

6. If it's true that "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God," what do we see Paul and Barnabas doing to help other believers face this reality?

A few possibilities could include how Paul and Barnabas strengthen and encourage the disciples in vv. 21-22, how they appoint elders to oversee local churches in v. 23, and how they reported back to the churches about what God had done at the end of the chapter.

### APPLY

7. What do you think this passage can teach us about the importance of not only demonstrating or displaying the gospel, but also explaining the gospel?

God did some amazing, crazy, eye-catching supernatural work through Paul and Barnabas, but those miracles were meant to accompany an explanation of the gospel. How prepared are we to talk to others about Jesus, including in situations where people have major misunderstandings about who God is?

8. The crowd in Lystra mistook God's work for the work of their familiar idols or false gods. What familiar idols or false gods does our culture give credit to rather than the one true God?

If an idol is anything we might give credit to that is only fitting for God, then we have a number of options! They could include things like hard work, "dumb luck," money, science, human ingenuity, etc. These are not bad in themselves, but can become idols if we separate them from God as the ultimate source of every good thing.

9. What can we learn and apply from Paul's explanation of the gospel in vv. 15-18 for talking to others about the gospel?

One major takeaway is that Paul understood that he needed to first establish that there is a single God who created and sustains and provides all things. He knew they were pagans, so he sought to connect their experience to who the one true God really is. In the US

today, we can't simply assume that people are familiar with the Bible or Christianity. We too might have to start with a more basic claim that there is a single God who created all things and who provides for us.

10. Based on the passage, what kind of life should we as Jesus-followers expect? What can we do to better strengthen and encourage each other along the way?

This is a core question that comes from the passage. Are our expectations appropriate for life as a Christ-follower, or do they need to be readjusted in light of the fact that "through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God"? Do we see the need for consistent strengthening and encouraging?