



# Devotional

Oct. 4 - Dec. 30

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Acts 21-23. Paul tapped into his Jewishness to speak to Jews, his Roman citizenship to speak to Gentiles, and his legal background to speak to religious officials. We need to be theologically multilingual, sharing Jesus by meeting people where they are.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

### **October 25–31, 2020: Weekly Devotion by Susan Northcutt**

The Books of Acts is the narrative bridge between the Gospels and the books of the New Testament. It is a sweeping account of how the word of God was spread and how the early Christian church was established. It took many decades in several locations (from Jerusalem to Rome) to plant the seeds of “The Way.”

Most important of all was the evangelistic work of steadfast apostles and disciples as outlined in the Book of Acts. Peter’s magnificent and powerful ministry, or Stephen’s valuable efforts which ended in tragedy, or Paul’s compelling journeys to the far-flung regions of the Roman Empire. These early apostles faced challenges, conflict, persecution, imprisonment. The descriptions, contained in many chapters, are vivid.

It is Paul’s story that dominates the Book of Acts, from his conversion as Saul that began on the road to Damascus and then to his “call” to speak in the name of Jesus throughout Asia Minor and into Europe. He witnessed in synagogues, marketplaces,

lecture halls, and public squares, bringing the word of God to Jews and non-Jews, the Gentiles.

I took a trip in 2015 “The Journeys of Paul.” Sponsored by the Florida Conference, the trip was led by Bishop Ken Carter and attracted over one hundred people. We flew to Rome and then boarded a cruise ship. Visiting Athens, Corinth, Malta, and Rhodes (among other places), we learned more about Paul’s ministry and his missionary journeys. For me, the highlight of the trip was a worship service in the amphitheater of Ephesus. Communion was served in this ancient Roman theater, the exact place where Paul witnessed.

All in all, the Book of Acts is an account of how Jesus began to spread across the world.

### **WEEK FIVE (NOVEMBER 1–7)**

#### **Day 306: November 1, 2020**

#### **Full Plan: Acts 24:1–26:32**

#### **Abbreviated Plan: Acts 14:1–28**

Acts 24-26. Paul was bounced from trial to trial, getting into trouble for preaching about “justice, self-control, and the coming judgment.” (24:25) And he was accused of “too much learning.” (26:24) Would that we would each be found guilty of such things.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 307: November 2, 2020**

**Full Plan: Acts 27:1–28:31**

**Abbreviated Plan: Acts 15:1–41**

The book of Acts ends with Paul in a torrential storm and shipwreck, and finally in Rome, where he preached to the masses. Then it just concludes, open ended. Perhaps we are the living continuation of the story, making Acts a story for us today.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 308: November 3, 2020**

**Full Plan: Romans 1:1–3:20**

**Abbreviated Plan: Romans 1:1–32**

Romans opens with a sobering indictment on humanity. We are broken, prone to harming each other, and unable to keep moral law on our own. Paul is beginning to build his legal case for why we need Jesus.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 309: November 4, 2020**

**Full Plan: Romans 3:21–5:21**

**Abbreviated Plan: Romans 2:1–29**

Romans may be the most important letter Paul ever wrote. So much of western civilization is based on Greco-Roman thought and ideals, and the case that Romans makes for Jesus is the basis for much of our theology today. Romans 3-6 is the gospel in a nutshell.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 310: November 5, 2020**

**Full Plan: Romans 6:1–8:17**

**Abbreviated Plan: Romans 3:1–31**

Romans 6-8 uses enslavement language to explain the gospel. Sin enslaves us, removing our personhood & freedom. Now grace enslaves us, giving us personhood in God & disrupting our freedom to sin (7:6). As Wesley says, “I am no longer my own, but Thine.”

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 311: November 6, 2020**

**Full Plan: Romans 8:18–10:21**

**Abbreviated Plan: Romans 4:1–25**

Romans 8-10. God's love is expansive and inclusive. It breaks through every barrier that might separate us from God (8:38-39) and it shows no favoritism to any one people. (10:9-13) Our response to God's love then is to claim it (10:9) and share it. (10:15)

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 312: November 7, 2020**

**Full Plan: Romans 11:1–13:14**

**Abbreviated Plan: Romans 6:1–23**

The first two-thirds of Romans is about belief; this last third is about behavior. Romans 12-16 is easier to understand, but harder to apply. We are called to obedience, humility, prayer, peace, and most of all, love. (ch 12-13) Nothing else but love mattered for Paul, and nothing else should matter for us.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**November 1–7, 2020: Weekly Devotional by Mandy Cloninger**

*Ezekiel 18:20 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)*

*“The person who sins shall die. A child shall not suffer for the iniquity of a parent, nor a parent suffer for the iniquity of a child; the righteousness of the righteous shall be his own, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be his own.”*

This verse clearly outlines to us that we must be responsible for our actions, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot cling to the righteousness of those around us and rely upon their good deeds to carry us into life. Nor, can we allow the excuse of others poor judgement to become our excuse for poor judgement and bad deeds. Depending on your circumstance this may come as a relief or may seem overwhelming. We are surrounded each day with temptations and opportunities to stray from God's will. We are tested by those around us and sometimes loving our neighbors and enemies becomes very difficult. We can have people around us that continuously fall to sin and therefore tempt us to follow in their footsteps. Still we must remember that we are going to be held accountable for our actions. We must confess our sins to Jesus, spend time in prayer, and remember that he died for our forgiveness of sin.

Prayer: May we feel your spirit Lord and go through each day with you guiding our way. May we remember to praise you and you alone, love all, and be selfless. Amen.

**WEEK SIX (NOVEMBER 8–14)**