

# YOU ARE THERE

## NOTES FOR TEACHERS

### ACTS: SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTION NOTES

As mentioned elsewhere, these notes are not the “answer key.” They are suggestions for where the discussion questions in this book can go, but feel free to go in entirely different directions. (In fact, feel free to introduce other questions.) The notes below are deliberately brief, so as to provide suggestions and pointers, but not “official” answers. In some cases, there are follow-up questions that you might add to the discussion.

#### 1. MATTHIAS

- a. You aren't an eyewitness, and you don't have miraculous powers. However, you have the published New Testament as a tool.  
b. You have the reliable testimony of eyewitnesses. You see His effect in your own life.
- Yes. The Bible says so (Matthew 28:19-20 [initially to the apostles, but the same command continues to all who are taught]; 2 Timothy 2:2 & 2:24-26). God requires it of Christians.
- a. Probably. Preaching and teaching. Living a life that demonstrates Christ's love and authority. Working miracles to prove the truth of what he's saying.  
b. Can do all but the last, but can use the Word to prove Christ.

#### 2. STEPHEN

- Possibilities include: going along with a lie (or not). Cheating with everyone else (or not). Accepting bullying or gossiping about someone (or not).
- Roleplay ahead of time (“If he says/does this, what should I do?”) Ask for your friend's encouragement (“I want to do the right thing, but I'm afraid I won't. Can you pray for me, help me?”). “What would Jesus do?” (trite but true). Decide ahead of time to do the right thing, and get in the habit of it; get out of bad habits.
- Get into bad habits; get used to avoiding the right path. Yes, you can get it back, but it's hard. You get it back by recognizing and rejecting bad habits, and developing good habits.

#### 3. ETHIOPIAN TREASURER

- a. Not really enough information in Isaiah — nothing about repentance, forgiveness or baptism. He needs to know more — either from the Bible or from someone who knows the Bible.  
b. Yes. We have the lessons and stories of the New Testament that the treasurer doesn't have. But if you come to it with preconceptions or don't read enough, you don't have good information.  
c. Very useful, if that person shows you what you need (rather than what he wants you to believe). You have to be careful about getting bad advice, and check what anyone tells you directly from the Bible.
- Respond positively when your friend mentions anything related to the Bible. “Do you ever wonder if there's a God?” Offer help from the Bible when the friend needs help.
- What do I have to do to be saved? Why do people tell me that I have to do ...? Why can't I ...? (*Be gentle with any responses you get, and don't try to answer every question immediately — quick answers that don't allow discussion are one reason why they didn't want to ask the question in the first place.*)

#### 4. ANANIAS

- a. Don't accept just a yes — get details: “What happened?”  
b. Perhaps parents, teachers & administrators, bosses. Perhaps siblings, friends, parents, teachers.
- Pray; study more; ask someone I respect for help. In the meantime, accept that you don't always understand God's mind and plan.
- Trust in God. Accept that some things aren't up to you. Realize that it isn't always about you — perhaps this is for someone else to deal with.

#### 5. CORNELIUS

- Yes. Perhaps, but not as much as good Christians. And God doesn't accept them into Heaven. God requires obedience; being good or nice isn't enough.
- a. Whoever taught Cornelius also taught them. Cornelius taught them what he learned. They trusted Cornelius enough to accept God's Word. They understood from what Peter said.  
b. By example (various ways). By teaching (various ways).
- Know by checking against the Bible. But it might also help to discuss with others, to make sure we're not making a wrong assumption about what we're reading. (*You can also discuss what NOT to do: reject it out of hand, attack, assume he's wrong because your church tells you he's wrong.*)

#### 6. RHODA

- a. You might want to distinguish between “happy” and “joyful,” even before #2. Happiness can arise whenever you're having fun; joy is more related to rejoicing and feeling good about something, not just happy.  
b. The love of God & Christ. The realization of salvation. The love that we share with fellow Christians. Delight in friends dedicating their lives to Christ.
- The Bible tells us so. Suffering (because of Christ) on Earth means that we are getting closer to God. Trials can make us stronger. (James 1:2-4)
- Possible answers might include: when a friend became a Christian. When someone recovered from illness or injury. When you avoided punishment or discovery. (Note that not all prayers are necessarily for worthy things.)  
Reactions: happiness, joy, relief, further challenge.

#### 7. BARNABAS

- Risks: Saul might be a spy, and they might all be arrested and executed. Rewards: another proclaimer of God's Word. A tremendous example of the power of God.
- a. Possibilities that might trigger a memory or a connection: someone who took over and forced everyone to do what he wanted; someone who wanted to make “friends” so he could laugh at you (unlikely); someone who had faults you knew about (gossiping, lying, stealing), but who you thought might be worth a second chance.  
b. What benefits your group can offer this person; what benefits he/she can offer your group; ways to avoid temptations to repeat the hurt.  
c. How much benefit of the doubt is not an easy question. Forgiveness means treating the sin as though it never happened, but you want to avoid giving temptation to repeat the sin.
- Positive reinforcement (“You're doing that really well!” “You're a great ...!” “You can do it!”). Praising him to others. Asking for her help in something she's good at. Finding opportunities for him to do what he does best. Helping and encouraging her to improve her abilities.

**8. JAMES**

1. a. Our understanding; they are meeting to figure out what God wants in this respect.
  - b. The things James says should be forbidden are forbidden in other parts of the Bible (other than just in Moses' Law). He seems to be applying God's law (about accepting Gentiles) in ways that Jews hadn't thought applied before.
2. a. Study together. Perhaps involve others to study with you.
  - b. Yes, in that Christ's Law replaced Moses' Law. No, in that Christ's Law itself is constant.
  - c. We do change some things — new songs, new translations of the Bible, new class materials.
  - d. Change nothing set by God; make *useful* changes otherwise.
3. a. Yes. Others' stupidity, bad actions; circumstances; your own faults.
  - b. Learn to count to ten before reacting; consider the rewards of patience.
  - c. By preparation (see b.); by training.

**9. LYDIA**

1. a. Perhaps: she already knew most of it; Paul is that good a teacher; she jumps to decisions. (We don't know for sure.)
  - b. Maybe. Important. Further discussion: should someone make the decision about becoming a Christian quickly or slowly?
2. By keeping in mind the love that Christ and others have for us; by keeping in mind the reward and benefits; by considering the real value of what you're leaving behind.
3. By what we say; what we do/how we treat them (get specifics).

**10. JAILER**

1. Perhaps: what he's already heard in the city; the example that Paul and Silas give him; the same determination that Lydia shows in the last lesson.
2. a., b. & c. Personal answers. Discuss the answers, particularly how realistic they are. Let class know that many people would have run away (especially if they had family who depended on them).
3. a. The more we know, particularly about the results and rewards of self-control, the more likely we are to achieve it.
  - b. If we can control ourselves, we can maintain that control — which is a lot of what perseverance is.

**11. APOLLOS**

1. Study; practice (few people are good the first time they try something); devote time to it.
 

Keep on trying, even if you don't think your first attempts go very well. Teaching requires skills, and it takes practice to develop skills.
2. Teach anyway; help more experienced teachers (and learn from them); know your limits so that you can stay within them but also expand them.
3. We weren't there, so we can't know for sure. Downsides to immediate correction: making both Apollos and others afraid to teach (for fear of public embarrassment); making it a public argument/debate, rather than a private study together. Perhaps there was nothing that couldn't be corrected easily with Apollos' audience, once Priscilla and Aquila spoke to him

**12. ELDERS**

1. a. Possible answers include: you are respected; you can influence people to be better Christians; most people are more willing to listen to what you have to say when you are teaching God's Word.
  - b. Possible answers include: people disagree with you; you must make stands for the truth so that others will be convinced to stand with you; you must take the lead on dealing with those who refuse to repent, which can lead to confrontation.
2. a. See #1.
  - b. Possible answers include: Teaching. Being a good example. Leading singing. Always being there to help people, so that people come to rely on your help.
3. a. Teasing; bullying; not being accepted as one of the group; being targeted as weird.
  - b. Know they can happen and roleplay your response to them. Find activities that are more important than how these people might treat you. Develop a support group (especially including Christians).

**13. PAUL**

1. Yes ... although there will probably be discussion pro and con (after all, it's a Jewish vow, not something related to Christ). Helping them complete their vow doesn't violate Christ's Law, and it helps Paul to be all things to all men. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)
2. a. Possible answers include: The final reward; a better life now; a life that you can feel good about; the support of, and your support for, your fellow Christians.
  - b. Possible answers include: keeping the goal in sight; studying to know what God has promised you; frequent praying so that you stay close to God; realizing what can happen and considering ahead of time how you should respond; developing a support group of fellow Christians.
3. a. Possible answers include: develop daily habits: prayer, study, time with other Christians, finding something to do to show God's glory to the world and to praise Him; reviewing the day and considering what you could have done better.
  - b. This is different from 2.b., in that 2.b. is about preparation; 3.b. is about immediate action. Possible answers include: appeal to God and fellow Christians for help; know that you'll want to tell your support group what you did; consider the alternatives to the temptation.