

WEEKLY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week of Sunday July 26, 2026

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INTRODUCTION

In **Acts 14:21–28**, we see that Jesus is not inviting His followers into an easy or comfortable life; He is inviting them into faithful discipleship that transforms both us and others. Many of us want to avoid hardship, yet we also long for relationships that help us stay faithful when life becomes difficult. God often uses ordinary people to strengthen and encourage one another through every season. As we discuss this passage, let's consider who has helped us remain faithful, and who God may be calling us to strengthen this week.

Main Passage:

Acts 14:21–28

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

He Builds, We Join Him

READ ALOUD

Acts 14:21–28

Opening Question: What is something that became easier because someone encouraged you not to give up?

- What actions do Paul and Barnabas take after preaching the gospel?
- What do you notice about how they prepare believers for following Jesus?
- Why do you think Paul and Barnabas emphasized strengthening and encouraging believers instead of promising an easier life?
- Where do you see a need for this kind of encouragement in your own life or in someone else's life today?

APPLY

- What hardship or challenge is testing your faith right now?
- Who has helped strengthen your walk with Jesus, and what made their influence meaningful?
- Who is one person God may be inviting you to intentionally strengthen and encourage this week?

RESPOND

- What is one practical step you will take this week to grow as a disciple who strengthens others?
- Who can you intentionally pray for, encourage, or meet with before next week?

DIGGING DEEPER *(optional)*

Acts 14:19–28

- What stands out about Paul's response after being stoned?
- How do verses 19–20 prepare us to understand Paul's encouragement about hardship in verse 22?
- What do you learn about God's mission from the way the chapter ends?

PRAY

Invite everyone to quietly reflect on what God may be showing them today. Pray that God would strengthen each person through whatever hardships they are facing, help them remain faithful, and give them courage to encourage others. Thank Jesus for His grace, His presence through every trial, and His work of building His church through ordinary people.

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES

Acts 14:21–28

- Why do you think Christians need encouragement?
- Who helps you follow Jesus?
- How can our family encourage someone this week?
- What does it mean to keep following Jesus even when life is hard?

For younger children: Remind your child that Jesus is always with them, even when something feels difficult, and He often uses other people to help us keep trusting Him.

For older kids or students: Who is one friend you could encourage this week to keep following Jesus, and what could you do for them?

BIBLE READING PLAN (OPTIONAL)

Scripture to read as you pray this week:

- **Day 1:** Acts 15:1–11
- **Day 2:** Acts 15:12–21
- **Day 3:** Acts 15:22–35
- **Day 4:** Acts 15:36–41
- **Day 5:** Acts 16:1–5

What's Going On?

Paul and Barnabas are finishing their first missionary journey. Instead of avoiding places where they experienced opposition, they return to encourage the new believers they had led to Christ. They strengthen these disciples, prepare them for the reality of hardship, appoint leaders in each church, and entrust everything to God.

This passage reminds us that making disciples involves much more than introducing someone to Jesus—it includes helping one another remain faithful through every season while trusting God to grow His church.

A Bit of Background

Traveling back through these cities was dangerous because Paul and Barnabas had already faced intense opposition there, including Paul's stoning in Lystra.

Returning anyway demonstrated that caring for new believers and establishing healthy churches was more important than personal comfort or safety. Their example shows that biblical discipleship is rooted in perseverance, encouragement, and faithful leadership.