

SESSION ONE

A Vivine Invitation

ACTS 13

Receiving & RSVPing

- Do you believe you have a divine invitation?
- Are you willing to RSVP without knowing all of the details?
 - 66 Receiving & RSVPing to our divine invitation is how we know and enjoy Jesus in all of His fullness!

Reasons Why We Don't RSVP

The "Justa Sistas"

We Can't Find the Invitation

Our Salvation is Personal, But Our Divine Invitation is Communal

In the middle of corporate worship, the invitation was issued and through corporate service it is carried out.

4 Reasons Why Our Invitation Must Be Issued Through The Unexplainable Church

- Practice
 Prayers
 Provision
 Purpose
 - If we have not devoted ourselves to Jesus's followers, we're going to miss our divine invitation.

Reasons We've Pulled Away

Wounded
 Wandering
 Wondering

- Becoming Women of Wonder

The Lessons in Acts 13–28 & The Unexplainable Church

- Connect
- Cover

SESSION TWO

What Will Embracing an Ynexplainable life Look Like?

3 Things the Early Church Faced That We Still Face Today

– 1. We Will Become Women of Influence

Acts 1:8 "You will be my witnesses"

Our witness influences others

When we use our inf luence wisely, we bring great health and vitality into The Unexplainable Church. When not used wisely, we can shipwreck the church.

We hold the greatest influence when we willingly become tools through whom the Spirit moves and works.

When we willingly surrender ourselves to be women of inf luence, we see lives changed, wounds healed, and hearts sof tened.

2. We Will Face Opposition

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:9–10 ESV

Opposition makes us an effective and powerful witness.

The Accuser's Agenda: Distract Us, Discredit Us, & Destroy Us Shove us off the witness stand

Catch us in a lie/discredit our testimony

Confuse the facts and begin to doubt what we've seen and heard Make our testimony unproductive and ineffective

As Witnesses, We Must Equip Ourselves

We fight spiritual opposition with spiritual weapons

We Connect in Community

We Cover One Another in Prayer

We Go Over the Facts

We Recite and Remember the Details of What We've Seen and Heard

We Prepare Together to Become Effective Witnesses

3. We Will Experience an Abundant Life

Peace—a clear conscience

66 I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 2 TIMOTHY 1:3 ESV

Purpose—rivers of living water

66 "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" JOHN 7:38 ESV

Joy-

66 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. JOHN 15:9-11 ESV

This is what being a part of the unexplainable church is all about: inf luence, opposition, and abundant life!

Closing Prayer: YES, Lord! Yes! I want to be a part of your unexplainable church. I want to be part of a growing kingdom that is so much bigger than myself. I want to be part of the people, the family of God, that live out their lives with peace, purpose, and joy...waiting for our glorious King who is coming soon! Yes, Lord, yes! I will commit myself to connecting with other believers, my sisters in Christ. I will commit to covering them in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit of God to come in among us, to do something only He can do. Yes, Lord!

SESSION THREE



The Liberty of Salvation

How do we become part of the family of God?

The only way to heaven is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

When you realize there was nothing you did to earn a place in the family of God—it was the free gift of God— you're going to live differently.

 I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. Galatians 2:21 ESV

— How does one become righteous?

- Justification
- Sanctification
- Glorification

The Liberty of Sonship

—	Walk with the Spirit—halakh	
	Halakh is the Hebrew word for "law."	
	Walking by the Spirit, we become God-focused and others-focused	
_	Freedom over our flesh	
	A new temptation / A new victory	
	Self-conceit = Self-deceit	
_	The law of Christ	
	Paul's word pictures:	
	Resetting a Broken Bone—Incapacitated	
	Mending a Net—Falling Out and Falling Away	
The Liberty of Service		
	Bonded to others & Bearing our own load	
_	What is the first step you are going to take to keep in step with the Spirit?	

SESSION FOUR

Biography of a Christ Follower

Being and Becoming—Heart transformation over task completion

Every age and stage of Paul's life, God was using it to mold his heart.

Paul's Childhood & Adolescence

66 Acts 22:3 ESV "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day."

Young Paul

Working and striving toward a place of high status and position

66 Acts 22:20 ESV "And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him."

The Call

66 Acts 22:6–8 ESV "As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'"

A realization of what, or who he had missed: Jesus!

The Wait

Galatians 1:16–18 "[He] was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then, after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days."

Set on a shelf and then sent home.

The Launch

66 Acts 11:25–26 ESV So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.

The Commissioning

- Acts 13:1–4
 Life as a Pharisee vs. Life as a Missionary
- 5 Tests

Spiritual Opposition: Elymas

Emotional Opposition: Slander at Iconium

Praise of Man: Lystra

Physical Persecution: Lystra

Letting go/Saying goodbye/Moving on: Lystra & Derbe

A Time of Rest and Rejoicing—Acts 14:26-28

A Time of Clarification & Evaluation—Acts 15

The Fall Out—Paul & Barnabas separate

Closed Doors

Paul's Macedonian Moment & Your Own

- Reflection: How have my life experiences shaped my character?
- What have they taught me about your grace?
- Have my experiences made me more kind and compassionate or more cynical and self-focused?

Closing Prayer: God, use my experiences to empower me with your grace and allow me to encounter the God who pursues my heart...

SESSION FIVE

Undone by Grace

A Picture of Grace

A Macedonian Moment—Philippi was Paul's Macedonian Moment

Paul's Macedonian Moment

The prayer of a Pharisee

"The head of a Jewish household would hold the same prayer every morning, giving thanks that God had not made him a Gentile, a woman or a slave. But here were representatives of these 3 despised categories redeemed and united in Christ." John Stott, The Message of Acts, p. 269

Are we thankful for our salvation or thankful for God's offer of salvation to the world?

Our freedom given to us through the grace of the Lord Jesus is meant to be a catalyst by which others are also set free.

When we are captivated by the wonder of grace, it becomes a catalyst to share the work of grace.

A Miraculous Word Picture

— Who is witnessing our freedom?

Galatians 5:1 ESV For freedom Christ set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

— What is that freedom?

The freedom of the Spirit vs. the spirit of the Galatians

No more striving, comparing, beating ourselves up

Thanking God for who I am not vs. thanking God for who I am becoming

66 Philippians 1:3–5 ESV I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

Paul's Conclusion

66 Galatians 2:20 ESV I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Closing Prayer: Restore unto us the wonder and joy of our salvation. Allow us to walk in the wonder of our sal- vation. Captivate our hearts and minds with this indescribable gift of grace and make us a catalyst to share that work of grace with others. Not because we're perfect. Not because we have it all together. Not because we're more holy. Not because we're more righteous. Not because we're more wise, but because we're undeserving. Because we were never worthy of it in the first place. But somehow you chose to give us that grace, God. May our freedom be that very thing that gives someone else hope that they too, might be set free.

SESSION SIX

Where Is God in Our Nifficult Circumstances?

Acts 15 and now.

Paul's letter to the Philippians opens and closes with the same call to action: Pray for Perspective!

66 Philippians 1:3–11 ESV I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

— What does Paul let the Philippians know?

That he loves them deeply and he is praying for them.

— What does that imply?

Paul's prayer is that their love for him will be able to see beyond the obvious circumstances. This knowledge and discernment is something God supernaturally does in the lives of His children through prayer.

These are the kinds of prayers I mark in my Bible and pray over my family and loved ones!

Agape love—a sacrificial love

Knowledge in Greek is **gnosis**: "To fully know as it really is...not just factual but also experiential knowledge, to know with certainty—to bring back to mind—or to live in the full awareness of..." ¹

Paul's prayer is that they will live in such a full awareness of God's love they will realize they are participating in divine activity whether their circumstances appear wonderful or difficult. Discernment is the Greek word aesthesis.

Some definitions of aesthesis:

The faculty for distinguishing the real nature of something.

A power to see what is not evident to the average mind.

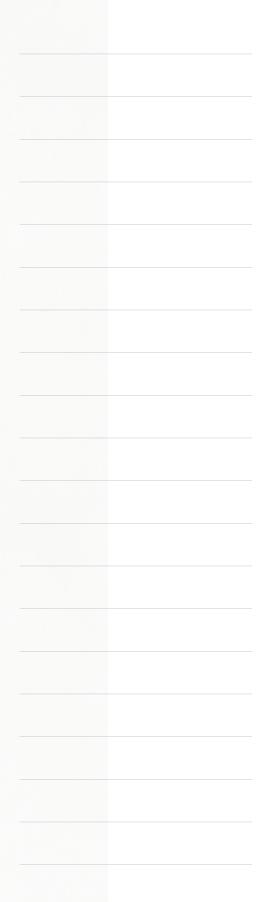
The power to distinguish & select what is true or excellent.

Understanding of human motives. A searching mind that goes beyond what is obvious.

Insight combined with keen practical judgment (a decision toward action).²

"Many people call the book of Philippians the Book of Joy. But in reality, the joy is just a symptom. The joy is what happens once we lay hold of this proper perspective. The joy is what comes from having the knowledge and the discernment of God's love in any situation. Because we can be confident that he is working."

 What will this perspective of knowledge and discernment allow us to do?



Approve is the Greek word **dokimazo**: This word approve means "test" or "prove" and is used for metal or coins to prove if they were pure or true.

Excellent in the Greek implies: To carry through To be different To spread news To make a difference

Paul's Perspective:

66 Philippians 1:12—"I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel." Because Paul was in prison, this is what God accomplished:

The gospel was being preached.

The believers were more courageous.

Members of the imperial guard (most elite and powerful army in the world) were coming to Christ as did some of Caesar's own household.

Paul's faith was being proved genuine by those who rejected Christ. Philippians 4:6–9

Our Perspective

Do you need a spiritual perspective in your circumstances today? Pray!

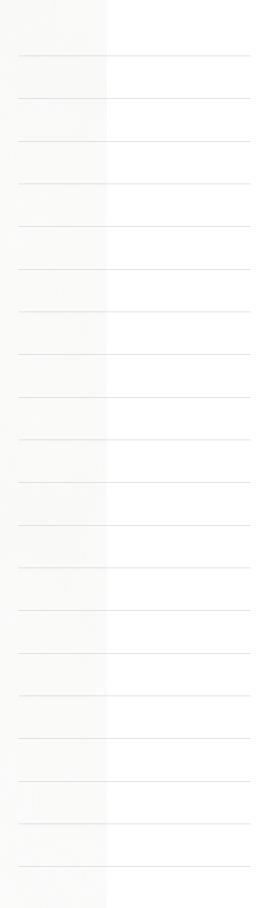
God is in control. God is able to deliver. He is working even when He is not delivering according to my timeline and in my way.

God is using your difficult circumstances to equip other believers who are watching you. Just in the same way He was using Paul's circumstances.

Closing Prayer: In the midst of difficulty and horrible things it is so hard to see you. And it is even harder to trust that you are working. And so, Father, we pray this prayer for ourselves God, that our love for you, our love for others will abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment so that we may be able to see the truth of our circumstances. That we may be able to know God, that you are bringing forth things in this difficulty that you could not accomplish in the same way in us and through us, if we were not walking this season. And we don't understand it all. And we don't have all the answers. And we definitely don't like it, God, but we ask for you to give us your eyes in our situations, God. The ability to see the good that you are doing in the midst of the hard. Because you are a God who is always at work.

My own circumstance

1 G., Kittel, G. W., Bromiley, G., and Friedrich, (Eds.). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (electronic ed.). Grand Rapids: Eerd- mans. (Book) 2 lbid.



SESSION SEVEN



Paul's Concept of Prayer

Some things are not automatic, but they are accessible

The Background of the Ephesians

A LOT of knowledge

An intense realization of the power and presence of evil spiritual forces leading to fear

Paul's 1st Prayer: Ephesians 1:15-23. Christ's Power & Position

The Past—the hope to which He has called you Their secret knowledge offered no hope

The Future—the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints The full understanding of who you are and to whom you belong

The Present—the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe

66 There is no power either past, present, or future over which Christ has not been given authority and rule Paul emphasizes to the Ephesian church that one of the most visible ways this power is going to be mani- fested is within the unity of believers...their ability to love one another

— So why do we still struggle so mightily?

Paul addresses this in a second prayer in Ephesians 3:14–19 ESV.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

All In This Together

The Power of A Name

Simultaneous Strengthening & Indwelling

While Jesus takes up residence within you, He strengthens you with His power.

Please, make yourself at home!

Faith & Love

Grasping the love

Our Own Prayer

66 A Benediction: Ephesians 3:20–21 ESV Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

For a full explanation of the gospel message go to ericawiggenhorn.com/how-to-study-the-bible/

SESSION EIGHT

The Word, The Word, The Word

People of Our Word

66 Acts 20:18 ESV "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia."

Intentions vs. Behavior—"We judge ourselves on our intentions and we judge others on their behavior."

Paul encouraged them to be "people of their word." He implored them to be people of high character, trust- worthy, authentic, genuine . . . to be faithful.

People of The Word

- 66 Acts 20:20 ESV "How I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house..."
- 66 Acts 20:27 ESV "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God."
- Diligently studying the Word and encouraging others to do so as well
- 2. Praying for the Holy Spirit to allow us to grasp and apply the truths of Scripture
- 3. Examine your prayer life

People Who Walk Out A Living Word

- 66 Acts 20:28–30 "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them."
- 66 Matthew 7:21 ESV "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Be intentional, there should be nothing passive about being a Christ follower.

Why do we struggle to walk out being a living word?

Stars & Dots

Elijah's question—1 Kings 17 & 18

False Fire: Identify it, confess it, stamp it out with all you've got!!!

SESSION NINE



Back in Jerusalem

Paul's plan to go to Rome

- Two issues the Roman church was wrestling with:
- 1. Unity among the Jewish and Gentile Christians
- 2. Why is evil still being allowed to flourish now that the Messiah had come?

Paul addresses these issues in his letter to the Romans: his most comprehensive theological treatise of God's plan for redemption.

Paul explains what we as believers ought to do as we patiently wait for God's full redemptive plan to be fulfilled!

God's Ultimate Plan—Romans 1:16–17 ESV

66 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

Futile in their thinking (pointless)

Foolish hearts were darkened

Definition of foolishness (foolish hearts): acts without counsel, indiscreet, hot-tempered, ignorant, thick-headed, easily led astray, learning only comes through brutish discipline.¹

Definition of darkened: the whole range of meaning may be understood in terms of the basic sense: darkness, not in connection with its optical effect, but experienced as an enveloping sphere and described in its signifi- cance for existence, i.e., as a hindrance to movement and action, to foresight, as the sphere of objective peril and subjective anxiety.²

Objective Peril and Subjective Anxiety — the real, and the "what if" or the might be:

A Path to Freedom—Romans 8:20–25

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is

not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

God is using the corruption of the world to be the brutish discipline, this enveloping sphere of objective peril and subjective anxiety, to be the very thing that leads people to seek freedom. The freedom that we know awaits us. The hope of glory that we hold within our hearts.

The hope of glory is Jesus!

Our Purpose in The Waiting-Romans 8:25–30

The Holy Spirit is interceding for the whole world through God's people

The redemption of the earth itself

The redemption of those lost in darkness and bondage

You are the very vessel which the Spirit of God is using to bring about His eternal plan of redemption for His creation

Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done, On Earth As It Is In Heaven

¹ G., Kittel, G. W., Bromiley, and G., Friedrich, (Eds.). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (electronic ed.). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

²lbid.

SESSION TEN

An Invitation & A Gift

An Invitation: Present your bodies as a living sacrifice.

66 Romans 12:1-2 ESV—I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bod- ies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be con- formed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

An Outward Sign of Inward Worship

A Living Sacrifice

From the heart and through our hands

In view of our merciful God

Shaped by the world or molded by God?

2 Corinthians 3:18—it is a continuous action God is doing to us.

Knowing and understanding God's will

A Gift:

66 Romans 12:3-9—For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophe-cy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads. with zeal: the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Evidence of our Surrender

Charismata—employment of our grace gifts Given freely by God/Employed in faith

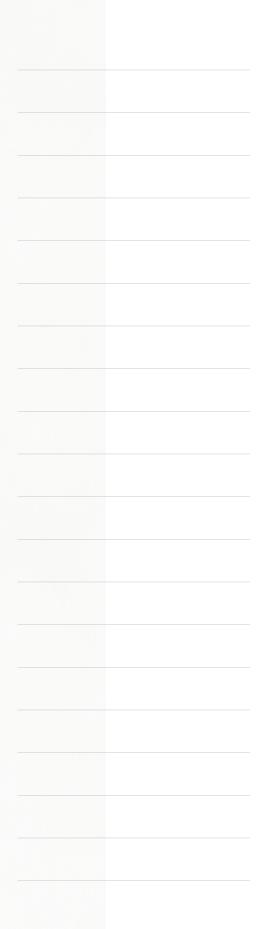
For the pleasure of God & the benefit of each other

In agreement to his faith (v.6) 1 Corinthians 12 Ephesians 4 1 Peter 4

The gift of the Body of Christ

66 Romans 12:9–13—Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one anoth- er with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

An understanding of our interconnectedness



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