

The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Strengthening Again and Again

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Text: Acts 18 (NIV)

The Book of Acts is the story of real people with real struggles and harsh realities experiencing resilient strength and incredible victory through the power of a risen Savior!

Acts 18:23 Paul went back to those churches he planted in Galatia strengthening all the disciples.

Acts 14:21-22; 15:32, 41

Definition: To strengthen: to reorient someone resolutely; to re-establish.

This is how a believer and a church perseveres with the real struggles and harsh realities of life and yet continues producing fruit that matters.

So what do I need to know, believe and do?

Know and believe:

- Christ has set me up to succeed and bear much fruit
- Life in Christ means that you will have enemies and struggles
- Christ works through your life on the platform of your weaknesses and humility
- You are never alone and you need others and others need you in every season and battle

Do:

- You'll constantly need to let God and others remind, reorient and re-strengthen you to the above realities
- Embrace hardship as God's pathway to producing more and more lasting fruit (think pruning and patience)
- Aim to be a person who can be trusted and who builds others up by orienting them to Christ
- Resolve to get up and never stay down

Living in our world is no longer complicated, it is complex...unmanageable... we're powerless over it...we need a power greater than ourselves who is able and willing to rescue, restore and mobilize us to live meaningful lives.

We need Jesus!

Spiritual Growth Prompts & Questions

The Bible has a way (through God's Spirit) of poking and prodding places in us that need healing, help, or transformation. Something may come to mind and your first instinct will be to disagree or try to talk yourself out of it. That's a good indication that Jesus is speaking. Did He highlight something for you today as you listened?

The Bible is also one huge story - written to lead you to Jesus. How did today's passage do that? How did the text make Jesus beautiful? Can you see Him? If so, how does He compare to the stuff of life? If not, what do you think might be blocking your vision?

Finally, the Bible's story line can get lodged in your heart and mind and mess with you. This is a good thing, but it can be uncomfortable. Jesus will use His story to ask you questions. Instead of you reading the text, it will begin to read

you. He will ask things of you. Almost like a voice in your head, Jesus will be calling and compelling you to action. What is He doing in you today?