



the upside down series
week thirteen: overcoming opposition

1. Opposition comes in the form of _____
2. Opposition is overcome by using _____
3. Opposition stems from _____
4. Opposition results in a _____ for God
5. Opposition comes in the form of _____
6. Opposition is overcome when _____
7. Opposition comes where you _____ it

There isn't a follower of Jesus Christ who doesn't understand opposition! It comes out of nowhere and it comes daily. This week we will cover two chapters in Acts with a focus on how to overcome opposition.



day one: guard your mind

Start your time with the Lord in prayer.

Paul and Barnabas are still on their first missionary journey in Acts 14, Gentile believers are being added to the church. The Holy Spirit is alive and directing every step of Paul and Barnabas' way.

Read Acts 14: 1-7.

exploring the text

1. Let's start by getting our bearings. Glance back at Acts 13 and re-read Acts 13:48-52 and summarize what was happening. Biblical passages are always understood in context.

2. What was the response of the people in Iconium to Paul's teaching in Acts 14:1?

3. Write down vs.2 below.

a. Who began stirring the crowd against Paul and Barnabas?

b. What about the message of Paul infuriated the Jews?

c. Poisoned the mind. What does that mean?

4. Where was God through it all? Check vs. 3.

5. How did Paul respond to the attack in vs. 7?

interesting fact

The most notable feature of the first missionary journey is the missionaries' sense of divine direction. It was the Holy Spirit of God himself who told the church of Antioch to set Paul and Barnabas apart, who sent them out, who led them from place to place, and who gave power to their preaching, so that converts were made and churches planted.

Application for
your life?
Record your
thoughts here.

6. Paul and Barnabas never seem surprised by the opposition. What was the secret to their boldness and perseverance?

personal application

7. I'd like you to focus on the phrase "poisoned the mind".

a. What kinds of things threaten to poison your minds?

b. How can you guard your mind from being poisoned?

c. Are there people in your life that tend to poison your mind? How do you respond to them?

8. Are you persevering? In what areas do you need help or encouragement to persevere more? Ask your Small Group to pray for you this week.

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day two: all glory to God

Paul and Barnabas move to Lystra. Their work continues by the power of the Holy Spirit. Let's pick up their journey today in Acts 14:8-28.

exploring the text

1. What made the crippled man at Lystra seem like a hopeless case?
2. What did Paul see when he looked at the crippled man? How does one "see" faith?
3. How did the people watching the healing interpret it?
4. How far did the people go with their idea?

5. How did Paul and Barnabas answer the crowd and honor Christ?

verse

John 16:33

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

6. How quick the tide turns. What happens in vs.19?

7. Does it surprise you how quickly the people went from worshiping Paul and Barnabas to wanting them dead?

8. How bad was the attack against Paul? Did that stop Paul?

9. In vs. 21, Paul goes back to the cities he had already visited. Why do you think he did that?

10. How did Paul encourage the disciples in vs.22? What specifically did he say about tribulations?

11. In vs. 27, Paul summarizes the first missionary journey. What did he say?

personal application

12. When men praise you and elevate you, are you tempted to keep some of the glory to yourself? How can you make sure that all the glory goes to God?

13. What kind of tribulations are you going through right now and how does today's passage encourage you to trust God in it?

Application for your life?
Record your thoughts here.

Lined area for recording thoughts, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.



day three: the law and grace

How would you like to have taken a mission trip with the apostle Paul? He certainly felt the pressure from outside the church, but today we will see how he felt pressure from within the church. Opposition comes from every direction to oppose the work of God.

Start prayerfully as you may feel some opposition in your own life the more you study the word of God.

Read Acts 15:1-21.

exploring the text

1. Who brought in confusing teaching about law and grace in vs. 1?
2. Who immediately resisted their teaching?
3. How did the church in Jerusalem handle this matter in vs. 6?

4. Who led the discussion in vs.7? What did he accuse the mistaken teachers of doing by dictating the terms of salvation in vs.10?

5. Paul certainly has a lot to say about this question of law vs. grace. Let's explore a couple of passages to glean his insight.

a. Galatians 5:1-7: what does Paul explain is the way to salvation?

b. Galatians 2:19-21: why is this issue so important?

6. How did the elders respond to Peter, Paul and Barnabas' presentations?

7. In vs. 20, what 2 things do the elders summarize as being necessary for the Gentile believers?

interesting fact

Legalism is the strict, self dependent trust in one's own efforts to perform to the level of divine morality- human attempts to become acceptable to God by means of human efforts.

Are you tempted to be legalistic?



day four: sticks and stones

The last two days have stretched you, I hope. God will honor your commitment to His word and your dedication to His truth. Keep on persevering as we finish up this week with a couple easier days.

Our passage today is shorter. Read Acts 15:22-35.

exploring the text

1. What did the leaders do to make sure the decisions from the council were adequately communicated to the church?

2. Why do you think the Gentile believers were given a list of behaviors from which to abstain even though they did not have to be circumcised or obey the law of Moses to be saved? Use Ephesians 5:1-21 and I Corinthians 6:9-20 to help answer this question.

interesting fact

Conflict that is resolved Biblically results in growth and unity. Be Biblically minded in all things.

3. What did Paul and Barnabas do after resolving the issue of circumcision? (note: it's becoming a theme in their lives!)



day five: out of nowhere

We will end this week's lesson with a handful of verses and a sad situation that attacked the friendship of Paul and Barnabas out of nowhere.

Pray that the Lord help you digest His word.

Read Acts 15:36-41.

exploring the text

1. Paul is ready for a second missionary journey. What is his goal in going back to the cities he'd already been to?
2. What was the conflict between Paul and Barnabas?
3. How did the 2 men resolve the disagreement?

4. Why was Barnabas more lenient towards Mark? Read Colossians 4:10.

verse

Romans 12:17-18

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

5. Was Barnabas' confidence in Mark later rewarded? Read II Timothy 4:11.

6. Two missionary teams were thus sovereignly created. List the members of each team.

7. May God have had a purpose in breaking up Paul and Barnabas? How does that fit in with Romans 8:28?

8. Read II Timothy 4:11. Did Paul ever change his mind about Mark?

