

Spiritual Growth Resources: From Discipleship to Apostleship

# Acts of the Church

Early Church Faith for Today



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## Brief overview of chapter 3 and 4

After seeing Jesus heal many, the apostles here make a bold step in telling a lame man to “get up and walk.” How many times did they hear Jesus say those words. They seemed to be very confident that those same words coming out of their mouths would have the same effect. Their experience with Jesus accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit, allowed them to *empower* another person. They gave someone else the ability to walk, who didn’t have that ability anymore. Doing something for someone who can’t do it for themselves. This empowerment was so that the lame wouldn’t be lame anymore and live for Jesus.

As disciples and apostles, we are called to lift people from that which is holding them back. Offer them something better than silver and gold. Sometimes these very people are at the door of our own temples.

We will focus on

**Knowing** the Word of God, **Growing** in our Faith, **Going** to share the good news.

**K N O W | G R O W | G O**

# Empowering Others

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## KNOW

Read Acts 3-4

1. What's it like to do something good for someone and then get in trouble for it
  - A. Frustrating
  - B. As long as I know I've done the right thing, I don't worry.
  - C. I am tempted not to help next time.
  - D. Doing good is always better.
  - E. Other.
2. What kind of empowerment had this lame man received until the day he was healed?  
Acts 3:2
  - A. People carried him every day to the spot where he could get money.
  - B. Worshipers would give him money so he could take care of himself.
  - C. The Temple was a place where he felt closer to God.
  - D. The community didn't seem to be bothered by his presence.
  - E. Other.
3. How did Peter and John empower the man asking for alms? (Acts 3:4-6)
  - A. They didn't ignore the lame man, they looked directly at him.
  - B. They saw beyond the need for money.
  - C. They saw themselves as representatives of Jesus Christ.
  - D. They helped the man get up.
  - E. They brought him into the temple
  - F. Other.
4. What do you think it's like to always be at the door of the temple but not part of the worshipping community?
  - A. It's better to be close than far away.
  - B. A 2nd class worshipper.
  - C. People tolerate you more than they want you near by.
  - D. You wonder why no one invites you in to join them.
  - E. Other.
5. How would you compare your conversion with the healing of the lame man? Acts 3:8

- A. Before conversion we think we know what we need.
  - B. At conversion we are made strong.
  - C. We go into the temple (church).
  - D. We rejoice at what God has done.
  - E. People notice the change.
  - F. Other.
6. After being healed the man went into the temple **walking, leaping** and **praising** God.
- A. I would rather keep the miracle to myself.
  - B. I would have gone home first.
  - C. He wanted to follow Peter and John into the temple.
  - D. He couldn't help himself but to let everyone know he had been healed.
  - E. Other.
7. What did Peter accomplish by getting up to "address the people"? Acts 3:12-26
- A. To bring attention to Jesus, by whose name the man was healed.
  - B. To remind them how they were part of what happened weeks ago when Jesus was crucified.
  - C. To highlight the prophecies which spoke of Jesus' suffering.
  - D. Call the people to repentance.
  - E. Other.
8. What was the response to the healing? Acts 4:1-4
- A. A massive crowd gathered and the people were excited.
  - B. The religious leaders and authorities were annoyed.
  - C. You do something good you get put in jail.
  - D. Shows you can't please everyone even when a miracle happens.
  - E. Other.
9. How did Peter and John do in their first court appearance defending their actions. Acts 4:5-22
- A. Peter was empowered (emboldened) by the presence of the Holy Spirit.
  - B. Peter didn't hold back and gave a clear testimony of what happened, how it happened and who made it happen.
  - C. He Peter made it clear that salvation comes through Jesus.
  - D. They impressed and confused their questioners.
  - E. Other.
10. What did this empowered community look like? Acts 4:32-37
- A. They were of one heart and soul and had everything in common.
  - B. They kept giving testimony of the resurrection.
  - C. They took care of the needs of the community members.

- D. People sold their properties and shared the proceeds with the community.
- E. Other.

## G R O W

Let's look at Peter and John in this story. They are walking together to the Temple to pray. It seems like they have grown and matured in their faith. In their years of following Jesus, there appeared to be some competition between the two.

Remember John's mom vouching for John and his brother James to be advisors to Jesus when Jesus was to rule in his new kingdom. That didn't sit well with the disciples, and I'm sure particularly with Peter. Matthew 20:20-22.

Peter, John, and James were part of the inner circle among the twelve disciples. John is considered the "one whom Jesus loved," while Peter was going to "build my church."

Peter feels more committed to defending Jesus and cuts Malchus' ear off. Where was John? Yet, a few hours later, Peter denies being one of Jesus' followers.

We see Peter and John racing to the empty tomb to see who could get there first. John 20:4.

John stays close to Jesus during his trial while Peter denies him. Peter feels unworthy to be a disciple, so he flirts with going back to his fishing job. Jesus then sets the record straight with Peter and tells him that his invitation to "Follow Me" is as real as it was three years earlier.

That day by the lake, Peter recommits himself to the ministry of taking care of Jesus' sheep. Even then, Peter is trying to compare himself with John. Hey Jesus, what about John? Will he have an essential role like me, or will he suffer like me? Jesus' response to Peter is that Peter doesn't need to worry about how John's future ministry will be like. Peter's only responsibility is to "Follow Me."

Acts 3:1 shows Peter with John now going to the Temple together to pray together. A lot of growth had happened in the last couple of years. Peter and John still have a lot to grow, but they have come a long way. Jesus' words, after many years, now begin to make more sense. How Jesus treated people and ministered to them now is something they understand and how important it is to have compassion on the sick, poor and weary.

They have a maturing faith and emotionally are facing the future in a healthier way.

### **Some observations about how this happens?**

- They walked with Jesus, and even though there were trials and difficulties
- They didn't understand everything Jesus was saying, but they trusted him.
- They wanted to be part of something greater than themselves.
- They went through the worse with Jesus, and they were able to put God's plan for them into perspective.
- They were amazed at the love Jesus had for them no matter what.
- They experienced Jesus' love for others.
- Jesus empowered them to continue doing what he had begun.

### **APPLY**

1. How do you see yourself in the story of Peter and John?
2. How have you put your differences aside for the greater good of the Gospel?
3. Is it enough to put differences aside? Growing in Christ would require not just ignoring differences but trusting God wants to bring healing and authenticity into our discipleship.
4. Is there someone you compare yourself to, compete with, to try to look better than to gain credibility and reputation in the community and even in church?
5. How does sharing in the mission of preaching the Gospel help us grow and mature in our faith?

## G O

In Luke 9:1-6, Jesus sends the disciples out to put their faith to action. They were to go out without Jesus but with the authority of Jesus. They were to “preach the kingdom of God and to heal.” We don’t find what the disciples exactly did. It just says that they came back and told Jesus what had happened (Luke 9:10). So the disciples did have some experience in healing and preaching. But soon after that, we find the disciples incapable of healing a child (Luke 9:37-40) whose father is begging them to heal, and then Jesus ends up healing.

Did this “setback” mean that they were off the hook and were no longer needed? The disciples ask Jesus afterward why they couldn’t heal the boy. “Little faith” is the answer Jesus gives. Matthew 17:20.

Did their faith change from when Jesus sent them out to preach and heal and between the episode with the sick child? They probably trusted their past faith. That was the “little faith”. They needed renewed and increased faith for the next time. In other words, Jesus expected to see an increased faith as time went by.

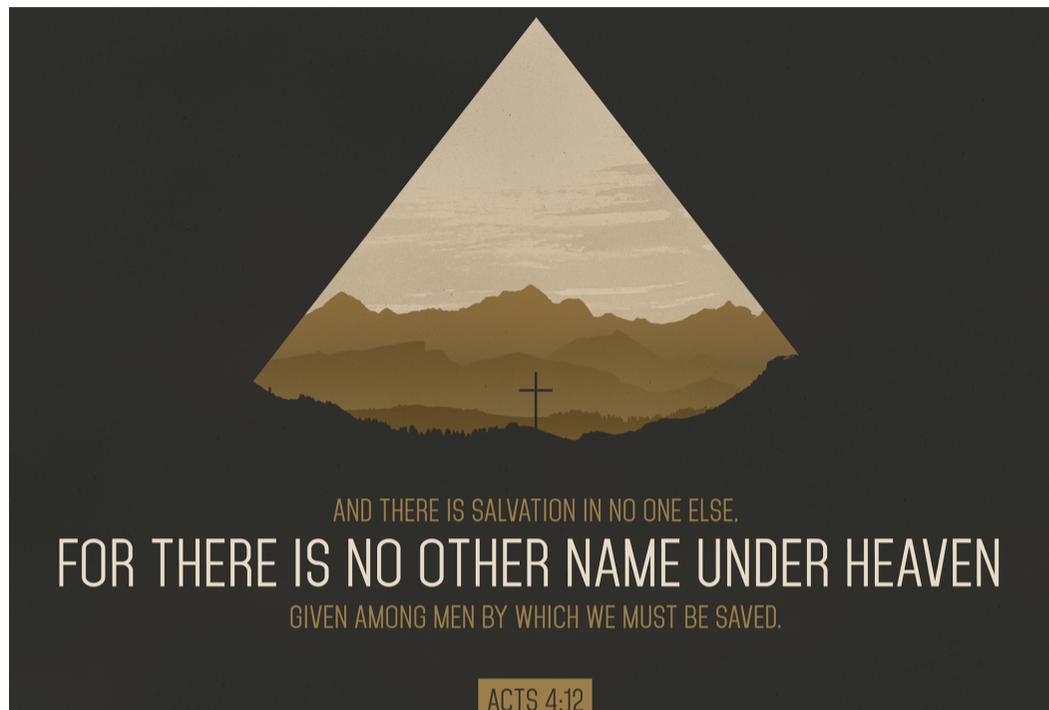
By the time we get to Acts, we see how their faith has increased, and miracles continue.

### **APPLY**

1. Preaching and healing go hand in hand. What does modern-day healing look like to you?
2. Taking a few minutes to talk with someone we find along the way may seem like an inconvenience. How can you take a casual encounter and turn it into a healing moment?
3. Invite someone to pray with you.
4. The healed man went into the temple and gave testimony of what had happened. How willing are you to give a testimony of how God has healed you in some way?
5. When the moment presents itself, how willing are you to tell others of what God has done and invite those same people to seek forgiveness of sins and receive Christ into their lives?

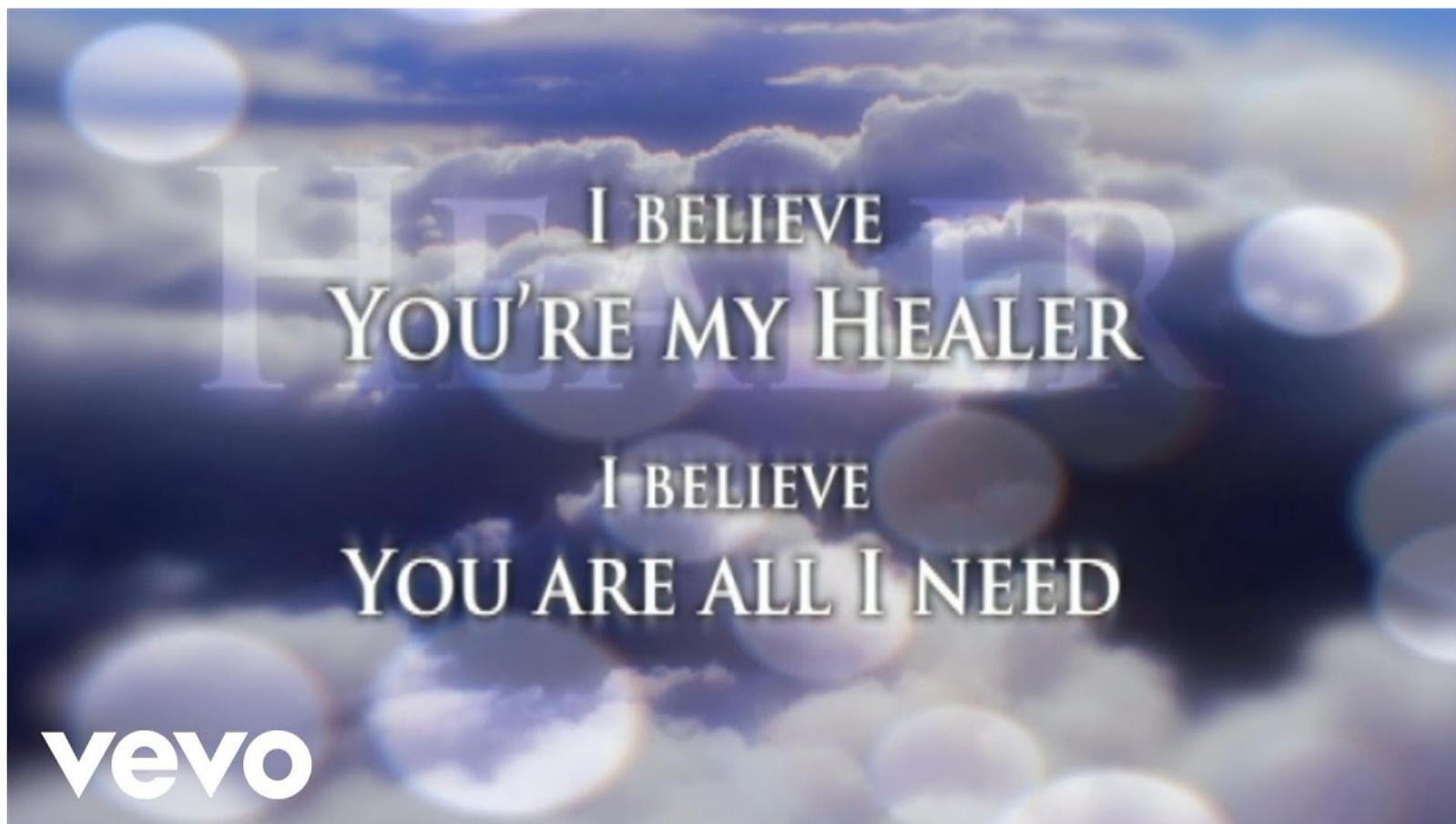
# Scripture Memorization for this Week

**Acts 4:12 - And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**

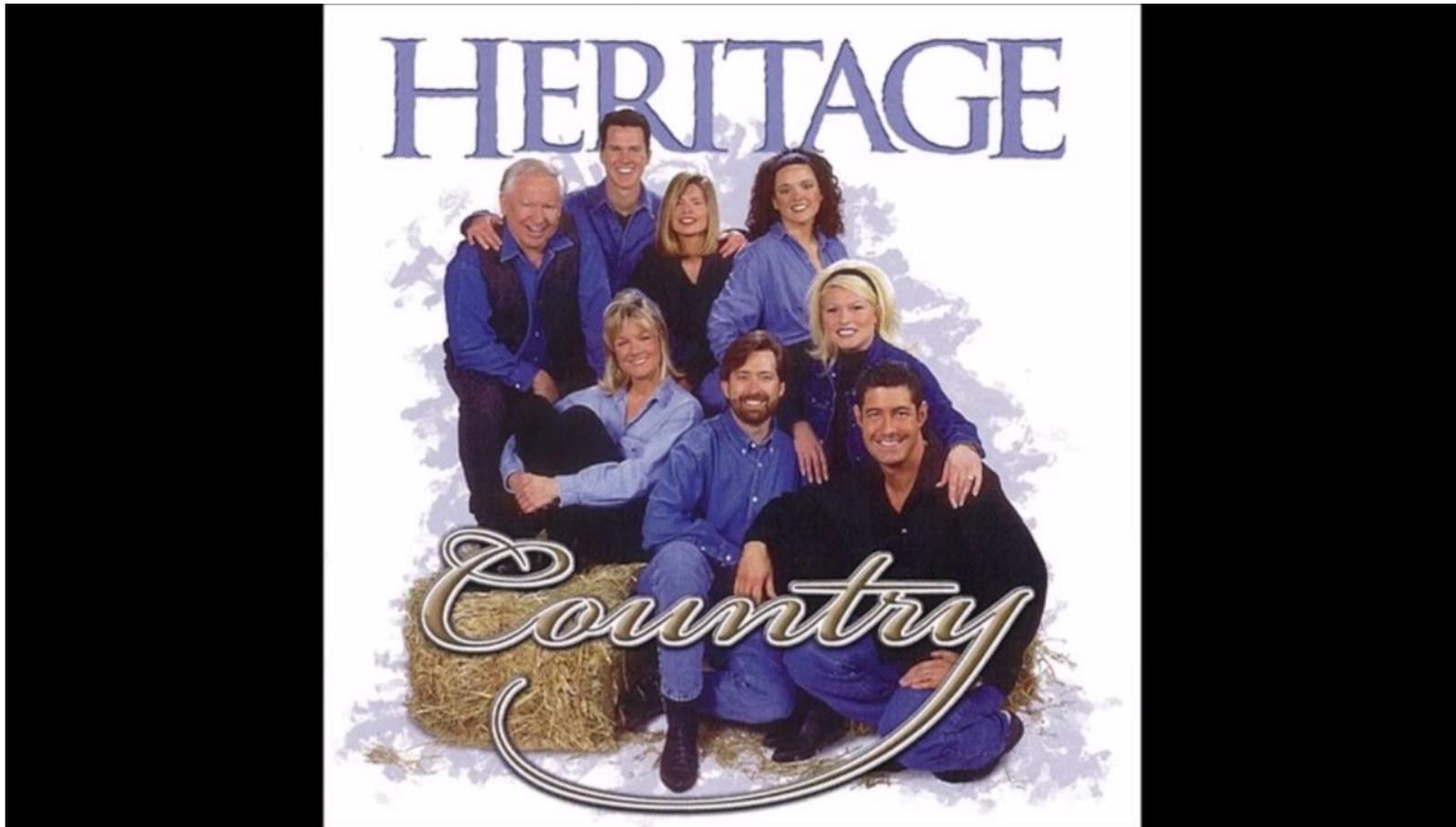


## Praise & Worship in Song

**Healer by Kari Jobe**



**Healer of Broken Hearts by The Heritage Singers**



**Healing Begins by Tenth Avenue North**

