

## Straight Lines & Crooked Sticks

### The Story:

#### *Did They Choose A Successor or Jump The Gun?*

Acts 1:12-26

- Why I think they chose the **WRONG GUY**.  
Acts 1:4/ John 16:13-15/ Proverbs 18:18 & 16:33/ Galatians 1:1
- Why I could be **WRONG**.
- Either way, this is what we need to keep in mind:  
*Acts isn't a story about **SUPERSTAR** Christians,  
it's a story about **JESUS** building His **CHURCH**.*

### WHY I'M AN OPTIMIST

- Jesus said **HE** would **BUILD HIS CHURCH**.  
Matthew 16:18
- Jesus promised that the **GATES** of Hell would not **PREVAIL**.  
Matthew 16:18
- God always draws **STRAIGHT LINES** with **CROOKED STICKS**.  
1 Kings 3
- Just take the next step of **OBEDIENCE**. God will **USE IT**.  
Proverbs 16:9/ James 1:22

# Life Group Study Questions

For the week of February 9, 2020

(NIV – New International Version)

## QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time, caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

## MY STORY

1. This weekend we learned that the apostles made a decision by 'casting lots,' similar to modern day throwing of dice. Have you ever made a decision using similar means (i.e. flipping a coin, spinning a dial, asking Alexa to flip a coin, drawing out of a hat)?

What is your typical decision-making process?

2. Under the section "Why I'm an Optimist," which one of the four reasons caught your attention the most and why?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. In the story this weekend, the apostles did not yet have the Holy Spirit to help them make their decisions, but prayer did play a role. Today as followers of Jesus, we have the gift of the Holy Spirit to help guide us. As you read the verses below, what do you observe (circle, highlight, underline) from Jesus as He prepared to make some key decisions?

**Luke 6:12-16** - One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. <sup>13</sup> When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: <sup>14</sup> Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, <sup>15</sup> Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, <sup>16</sup> Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

**Luke 22:39-44** - Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. <sup>40</sup> On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." <sup>41</sup> He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, <sup>42</sup> "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." <sup>43</sup> An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. <sup>44</sup> And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

Three keys to help you make wise choices in your decision making process are: applying Scripture, seeking wise counsel, and connecting with God through prayer. Have any of these things impacted your ability to make a wise decision? What has been your experience?

What are some things that could help you pray through and seek God's guidance in your decision making (i.e. time in prayer, consistency, memorize Scripture, pray with others, read Scripture, journal)?

Which one of the examples above do you want to try or continue to do?

Is there a topic or area of your life you want to be more engaged with God (i.e. work, marriage, parenting, finances)?

2. We heard some great news this week that God can “draw straight lines with crooked sticks.” Unfortunately, our culture today is fascinated with the mistakes of other people. From social media to reality TV, we are literally immersed in the personal lives of others. With so much focus on other people’s “stuff,” there is less emphasis on our own issues. What consequences in the following verses could help us remember we all make mistakes and need to be slow to judge others?

**Matthew 7:1-5** - “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. <sup>2</sup> For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup> “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

**Matthew 12:36-37** - But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. <sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

**James 4:11-12** - Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. <sup>12</sup> There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

What are some of the reasons we are so quick to judge other people?

Can you think of a time when God used you or someone you know, in spite of any weaknesses, fears or limitations you or they may have had?

## TAKING IT HOME

Which point from this weekend’s message or Life Group study is most important for you to remember?

## PRAYER REQUESTS

→

→

→

→

**THE ACTS CHALLENGE:** Do you want to get more out of Acts than just hearing it during the weekend services? There are 28 chapters in Acts. Try reading or listening to a chapter a day for 28 days and see how it will grow your understanding in our Acts series.

