

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, June 3, 2007

Passage: Acts 12:1-25

Memory Passage: James 4:6

TODAY: *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 12:1-4.** Who has Peter put in prison this time? Who had been responsible for the persecution of the Jews before (Acts 4:1-2; 5:16-18)?
- (b) Which James did Herod have put to death? What else do we know about this James (Matthew 20:17-28)?
- (c) What was the setting for this conversation (Matthew 20:17-19)? What lesson did Jesus teach his disciples from this (Matthew 20:24-28)? Are believers free from suffering and persecution (1 Thessalonians 3:12; Acts 14:22; 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4)?
- (d) Why did Herod take this action (Acts 12:3)? What motivated him (Proverbs 29:25; John 12:43; Galatians 1:10)?
- (e) What feast day kept Herod from putting Peter to death immediately? Describe the guard conditions—why was he so well guarded (Acts 5:18-22)?
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 12:1-4 and 1 Thessalonians 3:12. Talk about suffering and following Christ. Do believers today face persecution? What are some reasons that people persecute Christians? What kinds of persecution have you faced for your faith? Pray that you will honor the Lord even if you have to suffer persecution for His name's sake.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 12:5-11.** What was the church doing while Peter was in prison? How impossible was Peter's situation?
- (b) Why is prayer important? Does prayer change things (James 5:16; Philippians 2:27)? What happens if we do not pray (James 4:2)?
- (c) Do we *always* receive what we pray for? What are some reasons we do not (Isaiah 55:1-2; James 4:1-6)? Why should we pray?
- (d) What shows Peter's confidence and trust in the Lord (Acts 12:7)? Who else was able to sleep soundly in very difficult circumstances (Mark 4:36-41)? Why?
- (e) What did Peter tell his listeners to do in 1 Peter 5:7-11? Why should we pray? Give one reason from each verse (1 Peter 5:7; 8, 9, 10).
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 12:5-11 and 1 Peter 5:7. Talk about prayer. What does prayer do? What are some reasons that we don't pray? What happens when we fail to pray? How are confidence and prayer tied together? What are some things that you need to be praying about today? Take time to "cast those cares upon Him" in prayer.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 12:12-18.** What happens when Peter arrives at the door? What does this tell us about the prayers of the church? Does this give you hope concerning your own prayers?
- (b) How much faith is required for God to hear and answer our prayer (Mark 9:23-24; Luke 17:6)? How should this encourage us in our praying?
- (c) How does God answer our prayers according to Ephesians 3:20-21? Would this be true in the situation in Acts 12?
- (d) What is the primary reason God answers our prayers (Ephesians 3:21)? What is another reason He answers prayer (1 Peter 5:7)?
- (e) Two of the apostles were scheduled to die in Acts 12. One was delivered. What should we assume when God does not answer our prayers the way we ask?
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 12:12-18 and Romans 8:26-27. Do we as believers always ask for the right things? Do we always have "enough" faith that God will answer as we ask? How does the Holy Spirit take our prayers and present them to the Father? Thank God for allowing His Spirit for living in us and for presenting our prayers before His throne according to His will.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Acts 12:19-23.** What was Herod's response to the escape of Peter? Is there any evidence of personal conviction in Herod that might cause him to think God might be behind this?
- (b) What arrangement did the people of Tyre and Sidon want to have with Herod? What did they do in order to gain his favor?
- (c) How did Herod respond to their shouts of acclamation? What did he fail to do?
- (d) How did God deal with Herod's pride? Compare the situation with Daniel 4:24-37. How does God respond to the pride of man (James 4:6)?
- (e) What did God do to Herod? Does God always judge sin immediately like this (1 Timothy 5:24-25)?
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 12:19-23 and James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:6-7. Discuss pride. How would you define pride? Why does God oppose it? How is the pride of man an offense to the glory of God? Pray that God would show you areas of pride in your own heart so that your life and words might give God the glory He deserves.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read Acts 12:24-25.** How does this section end? What impact has this persecution had on the church?
- (b) What has God promised concerning His Word (Isaiah 55:10-13)? How should we respond to this promise of God (Isaiah 55:12-13; Romans 10:13-15)?
- (c) Where have Barnabas and Saul been (Acts 11:28-30)? What additional person do they bring back with them from Jerusalem (Acts 12:25; 12:12)? What role will John Mark play in Acts 13:5?
- (d) What did Paul ask the brethren to pray for him in 1 Thessalonians 3:1-3? What was his confidence?
- (e) Read Jeremiah 9:23-24. What are some things that we should not glory in? What alone should men glory in? Why?
- (f) *Family:* Read Acts 12:24-25 and Isaiah 55:10-13. Talk about the power of God's Word. What does God say about His Word in Isaiah 55:10-13? How is God glorified whenever we trust His Word? How does the spread of the gospel glorify God? Pray that the Lord will give you an opportunity this week to tell someone about the glory of God in the salvation of man.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. Read Acts 12. What should Christians expect in terms of suffering and persecution? How did Peter and the church respond to this new persecution? Does prayer matter? Why would a sovereign God require us to pray? Pray for your worship time tomorrow, that God might be honored and glorified by your worship!

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Prayer and the Glory of God
“And the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.”