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# SEEKING JESUS

Visuals With Points To Ponder
To Help You Find Jesus' Principle

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CLICK ON THINGS WORDS TO PRAISE AND WORSHIP, TO THANK THE GOD FATHER FOR THE PRESENCE OF HIS SON JESUS CHRIST, AND HIS HOLY SPIRIT WHOSE MINISTRIES, YOU DO WORK IN THE TRUTHS, JESUS SPEAKS

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SEEKING JESUS

CHRIST DIRECTS THE EARLY-DAY CHURCH

## QUESTION

Let's begin with a question. Which of the following individuals is mentioned most frequently in Acts?

is it:
A. Jesus the Lord
B. Paul, the Spirit/Holy Ghost
C. Peter

When asked this question, a majority voted for the Holy Ghost. In this class we will learn that JESUS is always the right answer!

## JESUS

IS ALWAYS THE RIGHT ANSWER!

In Acts, Jesus Christ is mentioned more than the Spirit, Paul or Peter. We see his centrality in other ways, as well. The first verse in Acts says,

*"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach"* (Acts 1:1)

The last verse says,

*"Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him"* (Acts 28:31)

From the beginning to the end, ACTS IS ABOUT JESUS. He is the main character.

## CHRIST CENTERED PATTERNS

There's power in seeing scriptural patterns. Consider what Elder David A. Bednar taught:

"Searching in the revelations for connections, patterns, and themes builds upon and adds to our spiritual knowledge... This approach can open the floodgates of the spiritual reservoir, enlighten our understanding through His Spirit, and produce... a degree of spiritual commitment that can be received in no other way".

One approach to finding patterns is to identify how KEY WORDS or PHRASES are repeated.

NOTICE THESE CHRIST-CENTERED PATTERNS IN ACTS:

"They ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:42)
*"Philip, preached unto him Jesus"* (Acts 8:35)
"Forty Christians went preaching the Lord Jesus" (Acts 11:20)
*"Paul preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection"* (Acts 17:18)
*"Paul [...] boldlied to the Jews that Jesus was Christ"* (Acts 18:5)
*"Apollos mightily convinced the Jews, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ"* (Acts 18:28)

## FOCUS ON JESUS CHRIST

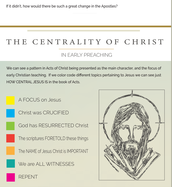
INCREASE OTHER'S FAITH THROUGH YO-O-PE PATTERN OF PUTTING JESUS IN FRONT OF ALL OTHER INTERESTS, AND OF TESTIFYING OF HIM

Seeing THIS PATTERN reminds us that both at home and at church, we need to focus on the Savior. Chad Webb, the Administrator of the Seminaries and Institute program wrote,

"The single most important way in which we can help increase faith in the rising generation is to more fully place Jesus Christ at the center of our teaching and learning by helping our students come to know Him, to have a testimony of Him, and to follow Him. There is nothing we can do that will bless our students more than to help them to come to know Jesus Christ. We must help them to love Him, follow Him, and intentionally strive to become like Him."

## JESUS | FOCUS ON HIM & HELP OTHERS SO THEY

COME TO KNOW HIM
LEARN FROM HIM
BECOME LIKE HIM



Let's highlight for a moment what the FOCUS ON JESUS CHRIST tells us about his earliest disciples. Within a period of weeks, Peter went from publicly denying Christ to publicly testifying of him. Don't leave your testimony on this, but this is a small piece of evidence that shows that the resurrection really happened.

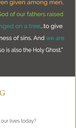
If it didn't, how would there be such a great change in the Apostles?

## THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST

IN EARLY PREACHING

We can see a pattern in Acts of Christ being presented as the main character, and the focus of early Christian teaching. If we color code different topics pertaining to Jesus we can see just HOW CENTRAL JESUS IS in the book of Acts.

- A FOCUS on Jesus
- Christ was CRUCIFIED
- God has RESURRECTED Christ
- The scriptures FORETOLD these things
- THE NAME of Jesus Christ is IMPORTANT
- We are ALL WITNESSES
- REPENT



## ACTS 2:22-38

"Jesus of Nazareth,... ye ...have crucified,...Whom God hath raised up,... David speaketh concerning...the resurrection of Christ... Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:22-38)

CORE TEACHINGS: Jesus was crucified, God raised him up. This was foretold in scripture. Repent and have faith in the name of Jesus Christ, and We are his witnesses.

WE CAN FIND THESE SAME CORE TEACHINGS in Acts 3:12-25 and Acts 4:8-12,5:30-32

## ACTS 4:8-12,5:30-32

"By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead...doth this man stand...This is the stone which...is become the head of the corner. There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things... and so is also the Holy Ghost." (Acts 4:8-12, 5:30-32)

## ARE YOU SEEING THE PATTERNS?

What relevance might this have for us in our lives today?

A recently returned missionary shared:

"When I was on my mission there were a lot of times where I was so excited to teach about temples, or the restoration, and sometimes I had a hard time mentioning Jesus Christ in those lessons.

One time my mission president told the mission, 'We need to focus on Jesus Christ more, and I thought, 'What are you talking about?' We talk about him all the time! His name is on our church! But I realized that there were lessons where I wouldn't even mention his name.

An important message from Acts is that EVERYTHING CONNECTS to CHRIST. All the great things that we have in the restored Gospel are because of Jesus Christ, we need to TALK MORE about the Savior."

EVERYTHING SHOULD CONNECT TO

JESUS CHRIST

## ANOTHER APPLICATION



Another possible application comes from a talk given by Thomas Griffith at a BYU devotional several years ago.

He shared his experience as a newly called stake president, feeling like his stake needed to focus more on Jesus Christ and his Atonement in their church meetings. (Think about his quote in terms of how it might apply to you in your family, church and other responsibilities.)

*"EVERY TALK MUST BE RELATED TO THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST..."*

LDS LIVING

*...We laid down a rule that every sacrament meeting talk and every lesson in Sunday School, Relief Society, and priesthood meetings* ***must be related to the Atonement of Christ in a direct and express way****...We told the bishops that if they wanted a sacrament meeting about the principles of emergency preparedness—important principles, to be sure—that meeting would be about "Emergency Preparedness and the Atonement of Christ." If you cannot figure out the link between the topic you are to teach and the Atonement of Christ, you have either not thought about it enough or you shouldn't be talking about it at church. Your topic may be fine for the city council, your neighborhood organization, or the commercial break during SportsCenter, but in our limited time in church,* ***we must be talking about the Atonement of Christ****."*

*"WE MUST BE TALKING ABOUT THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST."*

## CONSIDER NOW

### THE HOLY GHOST

We've seen a pattern in Acts of Christ being presented as the main character, and the focus of early Christian teaching. Let's now look at a series of additional Christ-centered patterns in the early church. The first has to do with Christ sending the Holy Ghost.

### THE HOLY GHOST AND THE LAST SUPPER

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At the Last Supper, Jesus said,

*"When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26).*

Then in the book of Acts, Jesus is with the disciples for 40 days after the resurrection and says to them,

*"Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence…. ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:5, 8).*

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### THE HOLY GHOST AND THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Sometimes we lose track of the timing here in the book of Acts. In Acts 1:3, we learn that Christ is ministering to the apostles and others for 40 days after his resurrection. And then we go to Acts Chapter 2 and it's the day of Pentecost.

Remember, Pentecost is 50 days after Passover. So Christ is resurrected, he's with his disciples for 40 days, and then a week and a half after his ascension, it's the day of Pentecost.

In other words, when we get to Acts chapter 2, it's been less than two months from Christ's resurrection.

## THE DAY OF PENTECOST

### ACTS 2

In the first verses of Acts Chapter 2 we read,

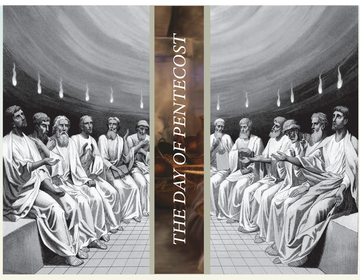
*"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability." (Acts 2:1–4, NRSV)*

## QUESTION

### PENTECOST - WHAT HAPPENED AT IT?

Pentecost was a big festival like Passover and Jews from many nations had gathered to Jerusalem. As the Holy Ghost comes, the disciples start speaking, and the people from different nations heard the apostles speak in their native languages. IT WAS A MIRACLE!

From this time forward, the Holy Ghost plays a key role in the ministry.




*"Suddenly there came a sound … of a rushing mighty wind, …*
*"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*
*"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."* Acts

## NOTICE THIS PATTERN:

*"Peter, filled* ***with the Holy Ghost****, said unto them…"* (Acts 4:8).

*"They were all filled* ***with the Holy Ghost*** *and they spake the word of God with boldness"* (Acts 4:31).

*"Then* ***the Spirit said*** *to Philip, 'Go near and join thyself to this chariot'"* (Acts 8:29).

*"While Peter thought on this vision,* ***the Spirit said*** *unto him…"* (Acts 10:19).

*"The disciples were filled with joy and* ***with the Holy Ghost****"* (Acts 13:52).

## CONSIDER THE PATTERN

HOW MUCH IS THE HOLY GHOST LEADING MY LIFE?

Am I open to receiving promptings and doing things differently because of what the Spirit says?

Sometimes a simple prompting can lead to bigger things.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO HAVE THE HOLY GHOST LEAD OUT IN OUR LIVES?

President Russell M. Nelson taught:

"In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost. I plead with you to **increase your spiritual capacity to receive revelation**."

## CONSIDER THIS QUOTE

FROM ELDER HOLLAND

"The book of Acts, which introduces the post-Resurrection portion of the New Testament, is technically called 'The Acts of the apostles'.

Indeed, a more complete title for the book of Acts could appropriately be something like 'The Acts of the Resurrected Christ Working through the Holy Spirit in the Lives and Ministries of His Ordained apostles.'

Now having said that, you can see why someone voted for the shorter title—but my suggestion this is more accurate!"

## QUESTION

Could we apply Elder Holland's suggested title to our lives?

Could we say, "Today I am living the Acts of the resurrected Christ working through the Holy Spirit in my life"?

That's a pattern from Acts we hope to implement.

## CONSIDER

ANOTHER PATTERN IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

It's interesting that, of the books of the New Testament, there's no book that uses the word "PRAYER" or "PRAY" more frequently than Acts. This is a consistent theme.

*"[The apostles] continued with one accord in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14)*

*"They continued stedfastly in prayers" (Acts 2:42)*

*"We will give ourselves continually to prayer" (Acts 6:4)*

*"Peter went up upon the housetop to pray" (Acts 10:9)*

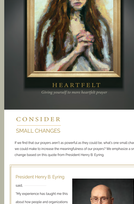
*"Prayer was made without ceasing of the church" (Acts 12:5)*

*"Tell the house of Mary, many were gathered together praying" (Acts 12:12)*

What types of prayers do you think these early Christians were offering? On a scale of 1-10 how meaningful do you think their prayers were?

## ON A SCALE FROM 1 - 10

How meaningful, how heartfelt have your recent prayers been?




## CONSIDER

SMALL CHANGES

If we find that our prayers aren't as powerful as they could be, what's one small change we could make to increase the meaningfulness of our prayers? We emphasize a small change based on this quote from President Henry B. Eyring.

President Henry B. Eyring said:

"My experience has taught me this about how people and organizations improve: the best place to look is for small changes we could make in things we do often. There is power in steadiness and repetition. And if we can be led by inspiration to choose the right small things to change, consistent obedience will bring great improvement."

THE SMALL THING

The "small thing" that each of us could change in our prayers is likely different for each of us. Perhaps we need to block out time when we aren't tired. Maybe we could focus more on gratitude or praying for others. We might choose to have a special place to pray, to kneel down when we pray or pray vocally.

## CONSIDER ANOTHER PATTERN

WOMEN TAKING IMPORTANT ROLES IN CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Let's highlight one cool pattern—a pattern of women taking important roles in the early Christian leadership. Let's look at three of these women and learn about their contributions.

In Acts 16, we read about Paul's missionary efforts in Philippi, an important Roman colony in modern-day Greece. In verse 13 we read:

*"On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a WORSHIPER OF GOD, was listening to us. She was, in deed, a purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying:*

*"If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home. And she prevailed upon us" (Acts 16:13-15)*

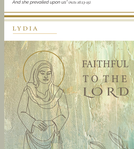
## LYDIA

From this description, Lydia appears to be a successful business woman. Did you notice that it doesn't say anything about Lydia's husband. It simply says, "Lydia and her household."

She's the boss. She's running things.

After being baptized, she invites Paul and his companions to stay in her home. It seems that Lydia's home becomes a key gathering place for the church in Philippi.

## PRISCILLA




Let's next look at a woman named Priscilla, who is also sometimes called Prisca. In Acts 18 we read that Paul and his companions met a Jewish Corinthian named Aquila and stayed with him and his wife Priscilla. Aquila had recently left Rome at the decree of Emperor Claudius. Paul then left for Ephesus. Priscilla and Aquila came with him (verse 18:18-19).

Paul left Ephesus, but Priscilla and Aquila stayed. A missionary named Apollos came to Ephesus and started preaching. He was a really good preacher, but he didn't have all of the details right.

In Acts 18:26 we read:

*"When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately" (Acts 18:26)*

Can you see Priscilla as a leader of the church? She's not in the salutes, she's not in a relation correct teaching. Today we might see Priscilla and Aquila as mission leaders, helping to establish the church wherever they are.

NOTICE PAUL'S ADMIRATION OF PRISCA (PRISCILLA)

*"Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles" (Romans 16:3-4)*

You can sense in Paul's words how much Priscilla and Aquila have done. They have risked their lives for Paul. Paul says that *"all the churches of the Gentiles" give thanks to them.*

Verse five says, *"Greet the church in their house"* (Romans 16) suggests that Priscilla and Aquila have opened up their home and are hosting church meetings.

## PHOEBE

While we're in Romans 16, let's look at a woman named Phoebe. Although these are only two Bible verses that refer to her, they hint at her significant church service.

Paul writes, *"I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also"* (Romans 16:1-2)

# NOT BACKSTAGE PLAYERS

## LYDIA . PRISCILLA . PHOEBE .

Can you see how Lydia, Priscilla, and Phoebe are not backstage players doing minor work? They are LEADING OUT to establish the church and bring it forward.

As we think about how this relates to us today, we are reminded of a talk President Nelson gave a couple of years ago. He said,

"In 1979, President Spencer W. Kimball… prophesied: 'Much of the major growth that is coming to the Church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world … will be drawn to the Church in large numbers. This will happen to the degree that the women of the Church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives and to the degree that the women of the Church are seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world.'

## GOOD WOMEN OF THE WORLD

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In this class we've talked about several Christ-centered patterns from the book of Acts. We hope you've had some inspiration come to your mind and heart that you can apply these patterns in your life.

## CONSIDER

IN THE BOOK OF ACTS AND IN ALL SCRIPTURE - HE IS OUR PATTERN

# SEEKING JESUS

visuals & points to ponder / printables

all to help **F I N D** Jesus' Principles

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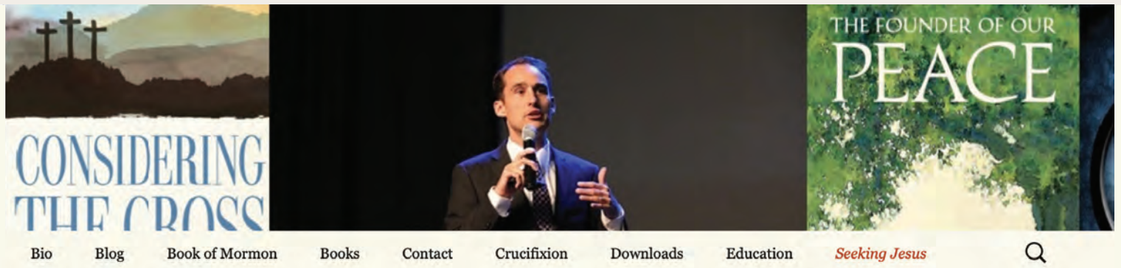


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