

# GROW Guide

April 21, 2024

Theme: Community in Christ  
Acts 17:1-9

## CONNECTING QUESTIONS

Who has shown you hospitality? In what ways?

Where does “Jesus” show up in our public conversations?

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of mercy, we no longer look for Jesus among the dead, for he is alive and has become the Lord of life. Increase in our minds and hearts the risen life we share with Christ. We rejoice with Christians all over the world today. Help us to grow as your people toward the fullness of eternal life with you. We pray through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

## CONTEXT

Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen indeed, Alleluia. We are learning to be, Community in Christ, learning about the formation of the early Christian community from Acts and 1 Corinthians. How did they build community when they had diversity and conflict? Let us look at what we can learn from them. Being in one building will help us live as one community and focus our attention and resources on being community and on being good neighbors. Being community in Christ is BOTH growing in faith and carrying on the work of Jesus Christ. So glad you are here!

From Pastor Sarah Henrich at [EntertheBible.org](http://EntertheBible.org):

Acts should be read as history interpreted from the author’s theological perspectives. The writer’s goals included clarifying how the beginnings of the Jesus movement yielded an increasingly Gentile membership that remained faithful to the God of Israel but no longer strictly adhered to Jewish law. Acts also attempts to make clear that this group of religious women and men did not pose a major threat to civic order, even though the God who sent Jesus for the salvation of all people was the supreme God no earthly ruler could challenge, and in their own way the missionaries of Jesus were “turning the world upside down” (17:6).

## LOOK AT THE BOOK

- Open to Acts 15:39-41. What was going on? This helps explain what’s happening in chapter 17.

- Jump to Acts 17. Paul and Silas pass through two towns on the Via Egnatia. Google this term; what is it? Acts are also known as travelogues. It's the story of a journey!
- When they arrived in Thessalonica, where did they go? Why? Find Thessalonica on a map in your Bible or Google.
- How many times does Paul visit the synagogue in verse two; why is that number significant?
- What does verse three say Paul was "arguing?"
- What was the response in verse four? Anyone who responded surprise you?
- We must be careful with verse five. History has shown us that when Jews are all painted as "jealous" or the villains, the sin of antisemitism comes through. Mob violence is real, scary, and dangerous. What might the earlier believers have felt upon hearing this news? Who becomes an unintended target?
- What is the accusation against Jason?
- Our focus words this week are: risk, compassion, courage. Which word are you drawn to? Why?
- What has been a risk that you took that was worth it?
- In verse 7, what are they doing contrary to the decrees of the emperor? Why is this problematic for the entire community?
- What elements of the criminal justice system today are on display in this story?
- How might we be praying and advocating for those who experience our criminal justice system?
- We are a "community in Christ." How are incarcerated women and men part of our community? Visit [stdysmas.com](http://stdysmas.com) to learn about one of our church's ministries.
- What do you want to talk about that has not been brought up yet?

## TAKING IT HOME

Who are feeling nudged to show hospitality to this week?

Who is someone from history that was like "Jason" from this story?

**God of the promise, you call your people together into your one mission in Christ's name. Make us brave, grant us peace, challenge our expectations, and empower us to truly follow your Spirit's lead. You are our one God who calls us together as one people, and we thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.**