

The Normal Christian Life: *Not Weak, Not Weird, Not Wandering*

Week Twelve: *Jesus and His Hangnail, Part 2*



Jesus Christ came to bring the life of God to every person on the planet. To achieve this, there was much he alone had to do in his 3-dimensional, physical body during his 30+ years on earth, not the least of which was to die on a Roman cross for our sins and then conquer the grave and rise again. But then, there is more. To bring the life of God to every person on the planet, he **presently** needs a physical connection point—a *body*—in every corner of the planet to be his hands, and feet, and voice, and witness. Each one of us is a key part to the physical body of Christ in this world **today** (see [1 Corinthians 12:1-31](#)). If we do not do our part, Jesus' whole body will suffer. Just like a pain in our big toe will put our entire body into a painful funk, if we fail to function as God designed us, all of Jesus suffers. Let's not be the hangnail in the body of Jesus. Let's step up to discover which part of the body we are!

So What? What am I supposed to DO with this?

- **Decide what I really want** out of life.
 - *Do I want all of God or all of me?*
- **Decide if God is a trustworthy** steward of me.
- **Begin to seek God daily** for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Audit Track – a simple look at Acts 21 and 22:

We are challenging everyone to join us verse-by-verse through [The Acts of the Apostles](#). Our “**Daily Six**” video series released each day this week—*Monday through Thursday*—parallels these readings from the Book of Acts (<https://www.youtube.com/@mounthopechurch1651>):

- **Monday:** Read [Acts 21:1-16](#)
- **Tuesday:** Read [Acts 21:17-20](#)
- **Wednesday:** Read [Acts 22:1-21](#)
- **Thursday:** Read [Acts 22:22-30](#)

Deeper Study Track – an intensive look at the scripture:

This week, make a commitment to **invest four blocks of time** to meditate on God's Word slowly and carefully, to reflect on the internal leanings of your own heart, and surrender to God for His help.

Day One: *How Far Am I Willing to Go with Jesus?*

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 21:1-16](#).

Reflect: The Holy Spirit made clear to Paul that arrest and imprisonment was ahead if he continued towards Jerusalem, as was his plan. Many of his friends pleaded with him to not go on, and apparently, so did the Holy Spirit (see [Acts 20:23](#) and [Acts 21:4](#)). God even sent a prophet with a dramatic illustration of Paul's coming persecution ([Acts 21:10-11](#)). It is unclear whether the Holy Spirit's warnings were intended to dissuade Paul from this path, or if there was some test of faith going on. Was Paul being bull-headed and doing what he wanted to do against the will of God? Or was God pleased with Paul's heart to consider his life nothing except to be an offering to God (see [Acts 20:24](#) and [Acts 21:13](#))? We learn from a letter Paul wrote later that he desired to suffer along with Christ so he could personally know Jesus fully (see [Philippians 3:10](#)). Consider how bold his faith that he would willingly suffer for Jesus!

- *Do you have anything in common with Paul in this matter? Are you so hungry to know the fullness of Jesus that you would welcome suffering for him? Why or why not?*
- *Does the thought of suffering for Jesus bring you anxiety and fear? Or does it inspire you to greater devotion to Jesus? What good can you envision coming from persecution or hardship?*
- *Since we do not live in a context where real persecution is common, what other kinds of suffering might you face for Jesus?*

Pray: *God, reveal to me the depth of my commitment to you. Help me see how fully surrendered I am to whatever you would ask of me. Strengthen my faith to face hardships with deep and abiding trust in you. I desire to value you so greatly that I would go wherever you want me to go. Help me have confidence in you for whatever lies ahead. In Jesus' name!*
(ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 91](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Two: What Do We Do with the Old Testament?

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 21:17-20](#).

Reflect: When Paul arrived at Jerusalem, things began to unfold just as the Holy Spirit had showed him. Many devout Jews were greatly agitated at Paul's presence and what they believed to be his abandonment of the Jewish scriptures—what we call the Old Testament. But Paul remained faithful to his commitment to God. Jesus never intended to start a new religion; Jesus was Jewish, and his entire purpose was to fulfill the promises of God to Israel as the Jewish Messiah. But when he was rejected by them, God turned outward towards the Gentiles. He did not place the same expectations on the Gentiles in terms of many of the rituals and symbols revealed in the Old Testament, but rather allowed the Gentiles to focus solely on the freedom and grace we find in Jesus. However, Jesus revealed that the Jewish scriptures (called "the Law and the prophets") still have relevance to us today (see [Matthew 5:17-20](#)).

- *What intimidates you about the Old Testament? Do you perceive God in the Old Testament as someone different than He is in the New Testament? What do you like or dislike about what you see in the Old Testament?*
- *Should you spend some time studying the Old Testament for a greater understanding of God's agenda for the world? Where might you start? What help do you need to understand it in context to your life in Jesus now? Who could help you?*

Pray: *God, help me see you and understand you in both the Old and New Testaments. Reveal to me the consistency of your identity and character between the two. Help me overcome my fears and confusion with you as I read the Old Testament. Give me wisdom to walk in the fullness of your grace while I also understand the meaning of your Law. In Jesus' name!*
(ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 119:9-16](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Three: What Is Your Story with Jesus?

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 22:1-21](#).

Reflect: When Paul was given a chance to speak to the people of Jerusalem while in custody of Roman law enforcement, he made his

defense simply about his story. He recounted how he had come to know and love Jesus—a dramatic change from his profoundly angry and murderous past towards Christians. We learn more about what captured Paul's heart when Ananias told him that he had been specifically chosen by God to know Him, see Him, and hear Him (see [Acts 22:14](#)).

- *What is your story with Jesus? How did you come to faith? Was there a specific thing God showed you that captured your heart and changed you forever?*
- *Are you comfortable telling others this story? Why or why not?*

Pray: *God, thank you capturing my heart. Help me remember how you spoke to me in those early days. Give me clarity about my story and equip me to share it with others. Lead me to the people who would benefit from hearing what you've done in my life and help me tell them. In Jesus' name!*
(ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 27](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Four: How You Know You're Right on Target

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 22:22-30](#).

Reflect: There is an old saying that "you know you're over the target when the enemy is shooting at you." None of us want to be persecuted or face difficulty with other people. In fact, this is one of the greatest reasons people shy away from sharing their faith as our culture has developed an increasing discomfort—and at times an outright hostility—towards Christianity. But one of the signs we are right on target with the Lord is when the world hates us. Jesus said it would be this way. But he also explained this really has nothing to do with us, but rather it is the world's hatred of the idea of Jesus being Lord (see [John 15:18-27](#)).

- *How do the non-Christians in your life see Jesus? Why are they disinterested in Christ? Do they have strongly held negative opinions? Why do they feel the way they feel?*
- *Have you been able to share with your non-believing friends about Jesus? How did it go? How did you feel about it?*

Pray: *God, please soften the minds and hearts of my non-Christian family and friends. Help them to be open to knowing you. Empower me to share with them who you are and what you've done in my life. In Jesus' name!*
(ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 37](#) as your own prayer to God!)