

## Why Don't More People Follow Jesus? | Acts 4 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

**Purpose of Discussion:** To develop courage and love for those not yet believing.

**Icebreaker:** What do you have going on in your life this Fall that excites you?

### Transition:

In Acts 3, Peter and John healed a man who had been unable to walk since birth then stood in the Temple to tell people about Jesus's resurrection.

### Discussion

#### Read:

#### Acts 4:1-4

<sup>1</sup> The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. <sup>2</sup> They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup> They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. <sup>4</sup> But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

**Note:** *Sadducees were a sect of Judaism with connections to Rome and positions of power often including the priesthood and were more liberal in some of their views.*

1. Why were the Sadducees "greatly disturbed"?

#### Read:

#### Acts 4:5-12

<sup>5</sup> The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. <sup>7</sup> They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

<sup>8</sup> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! <sup>9</sup> If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, <sup>10</sup> then know this, you

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and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. <sup>11</sup> Jesus is

“the stone you builders rejected,  
which has become the cornerstone.’

<sup>12</sup> Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

2. What is Peter’s defence? How would characterize Peter?

**Read:**

[Acts 4:13-22](#)

<sup>13</sup> When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. <sup>14</sup> But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. <sup>15</sup> So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. <sup>16</sup> “What are we going to do with these men?” they asked. “Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. <sup>17</sup> But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name.”

<sup>18</sup> Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup> But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! <sup>20</sup> As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

<sup>21</sup> After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. <sup>22</sup> For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

**Note:** *The ruling priests couldn’t deny the evidence that a man known to be unable to walk since birth had been healed (vs. 14, 21-22). A lot of times we deny the evidence because it’s not what we want to believe. Keith referenced the Tobacco CEOs denying that Nicotine was addictive and Aldous Huxley saying with great honesty that his rejection of Christianity was his desire for sexual freedom.*

3. Why might people not want Christianity to be true?

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**Optional Dig Deeper Question:** What evidence for Christianity do you find convincing?

4. Are there teachings in the Bible that you don't want to be true because you don't want to surrender that part of your life?

**Note:** *V.13 points out that the leaders noted that these unschooled, ordinary men who are speaking with such wisdom and courage had spent time with Jesus. Keith asked: What would people say you have spent time with by the way you act? Netflix? Amazon? TikTok?*

5. How are you being shaped by what you are spending time with outside of Jesus?

**Quote from Keith's Sermon:**

"When you spend time with Jesus you move from fear to courage. But that's not the only change. When you're with Jesus you move from pride to humility, from lust to purity, from anger to patience, from searching for satisfaction to experiencing contentment. When you spend time with Jesus you become more like him."

6. What would it look like for you to spend more time with Jesus?

**Sharing and Prayer:**

- Have everyone share: Who is someone that God brought to mind who doesn't yet believe?
- Allow a time of silent prayer for everyone to pray for that person.
- Close in prayer asking for God to soften the hearts of those we prayed for, to draw them to himself, and to give us love, courage, and wisdom to tell them about you and to show what Jesus is like by our life.