LIVING SUPERNATURALLY

Living Supernaturally (Bible Study)

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

WEEK 1
Making Jesus Known 3

WEEK 2
Principles of Power 17

WEEK 3
Becoming the Church 31

WEEK 4
Rise and Walk 45

WEEK 5
Holy Boldness 59

WEEK 6
Encouraging Others 73

WEEK 7
Living Supernaturally or Superficially 87

WEEK 8
Living in Obedience 101

WEEK 9
Exposing False Religion 115

WEEK 10
Evangelism: A Way of Life 129

WEEK 11
Jesus in the Old Testament 143

WEEK 12
Dealing With Crisis 157

INTRODUCTION

LIVING SUPERNATURALLY

In our natural lives, we face trials and problems that we can't handle on our own. This causes us to learn to live supernaturally. When we give God our broken hearts, He does a supernatural work to heal us. Then He asks us to become His ambassadors and share the Good News with those around us, who are also hurting.

God has been so good to us. He created the Church to be one of His main channels for supernatural help and healing—so that we can live beyond what we can see and feel. When we talk about the Church (with a capital "C"), we are talking about God's universal Church, the Body of Christ to which every believer belongs. Hopefully you have a local church that you attend, and hopefully you will see the characteristics of the Church in your own church.

The Church has three purposes: to magnify Jesus, to move believers toward maturity and ministry, and to make Jesus known. Everything we study in the Book of Acts is part of God's bigger plan for making Jesus known throughout the whole world. As we look at the stories of the Early Church, remember that God is still at work in the Church today.

When we enjoy the fruit of living supernaturally, we join God in His mission to save and redeem the whole world.

There is no promise God cannot keep, no prayer God will not answer, and no problem too hard for Him to solve.

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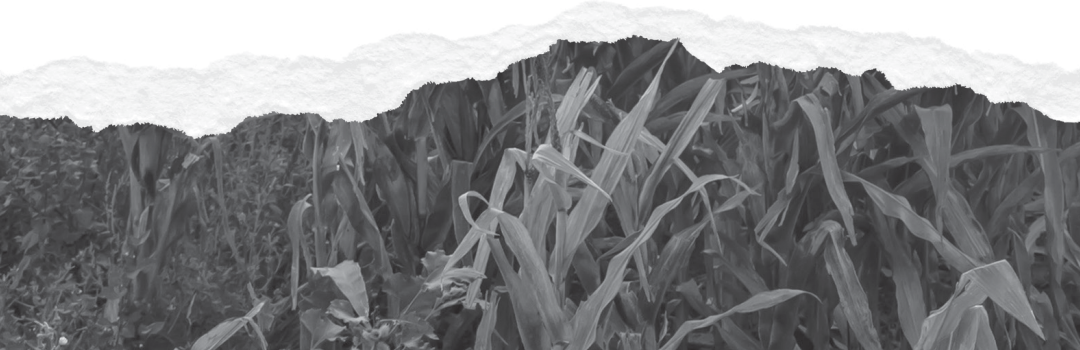

WEEK 1

MAKING JESUS KNOWN

INTRODUCTION

Living in the natural realm, we face trials and problems that often seem too big for us to handle. But what does it mean to live supernaturally? What does it mean to give God your problems? What does it mean to give Him a broken heart and let Him heal it? What does it mean to live in Christ?

In this series, we want you to know what it means to live life supernaturally, and the Church is one of God's main channels for helping you live supernaturally. In this study of the Books of Acts, we are looking at how God uses the Church to make Jesus known. We aren't just talking about your local church or the one you physically attend or watch online. When we talk about His Church, we refer to the universal Church. Every biblically based local church is part of the universal Church and every true believer in Jesus Christ is a member of the Church. This is not an optional membership; you become a member when you believe in Jesus as your Savior.

The Church has three purposes: to magnify Jesus, to move believers toward maturity and ministry, and to make Jesus known. People in this world need to know Jesus. If you know Jesus, then you are already a part of God's plan to make Jesus known throughout the world. This week we are going to take a closer look at Acts 1:1-8.

PRAY OVER IT

Dear God, When I think about all You have done for me, I am overwhelmed. Thank you for making me a part of Your Church. Open my eyes to see Your presence in my life, and open my ears to hear Your promises to me. Forgive me for the times when I have not acknowledged Your presence in my life and the times that I have forgotten Your promises. Help me to be a witness for You in all areas of my life. My desire is to make You known throughout the world. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAY 1

THIS IS A BIBLE

PONDER IT

Read the first eight verses of the Book of Acts. This book was written by Luke, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke. Luke was a physician, a doctor, which proves that you don't have to check your brains at the door to believe the Bible. The Book of Acts is not the story of the "acts of the apostles"; it is the story of the acts of Jesus Christ.

> **The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:1-3).**

The "former account" in this passage refers to the Gospel of Luke, which records the work that Jesus began to do. The book of Acts records the work that Jesus continues to do. Jesus' work was not finished when He died on the cross or when He rose from the dead or when He ascended into Heaven. His work continues through the Church, and the Book of Acts shows us what Jesus was continuing to do through His disciples, particularly through a set group of disciples who were chosen as the Apostles to be messengers of the Gospel.

In the first four books of the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—we find out what Jesus did in His human body, the body of His flesh. In the Book of Acts, we find out what Jesus is doing in His mystical body, the Church. Jesus is still active on Earth today. The Book of Acts shows us what He wants to do today in His body, the Church.

A church is not some sort of a glorified country club with stained-glass windows and a steeple on top. We have been commissioned to go into all the world. We are responsible for making Jesus known. If we want to live

supernaturally, not superficially, we're going to have to go back to the basics found in the Book of Acts.

There's a story about the legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers, Vince Lombardi. One day his team had played miserably. Lombardi wanted to get the boys back to the fundamentals, back to the basics of the game. He reached into a bag and pulled out a football and said, "Gentlemen, this is a football." When he said that to a room full of professional football players, he was not telling them something they didn't know. He was calling them to go back to the basics.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is a Bible." It is the Word of God. We need to value it and get back to the very essence, the very fundamentals of the faith. The Book of Acts helps us understand what the Church was like two thousand years ago. God wants us to use that as a blueprint to live supernaturally and make Jesus known. We've got to go back to the basics.

PUT IT IN WRITING

- In what ways have you gotten away from the fundamentals of your faith? What are the things you may have forgotten that God wants you to remember?
- How would you define the mission of the Church in your own words? When you look at your definition, and even at the mission statement of the church you attend, how does it compare to the first few verses of the Book of Acts?

If we want God to do a new work in our lives and in our world, we're going to have to find something old.

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DAY 2

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

PONDER IT

Notice the mission Jesus gives to His disciples in these verses:

> **"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).**

It sounds like an impossible mission for this little group of ragtag apostles. Some of them were fishermen. Most of them didn't have any education; none of them attended seminary. They had no finances because they had abandoned their livelihoods to follow Jesus. They had no prestige and no political clout.

They were also facing difficult circumstances. The imperial might of the iron legions of Rome was in control of the government. The intellectual sophistry of the Greeks valued what could be observed in the natural world. The strict religious laws of the Jewish religion had just been used to execute their leader. But Jesus commanded them to go into all of the world and tell people about a Galilean peasant who died on a cross, crucified by the Roman government.

The Gospel of Matthew ended with Jesus' commandment to His disciples:

> **"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).**

As we are making Jesus known, there are three things He wants us to do:

- **We are to make disciples.** He didn't say get people to make decisions or get conversions. Getting someone to make a decision is just the first step in the process. Making disciples is a much bigger and more difficult task.
- **We are to mark disciples through baptism.** Jesus Himself commenced His public ministry by baptism, and He concluded His public ministry commanding baptism. Once you are a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, obedience through baptism by immersion confirms in a public way that you are committed to Jesus. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward commitment, much like a wedding ring is an outward sign of a promise. In the same way a ring shows that you belong to your spouse, baptism shows that you belong to Jesus Christ.
- **We are to mature disciples.** Learning to live like Jesus and observe His commands is a process. While following Jesus begins with a decision, it continues through obedience.

Jesus gave them this mission because He knew that in Him they could do it. But He also knew that without Him they could not do it. He wants to complete the mission with us, in us, and through us.

PUT IT IN WRITING

- Does the last commandment of Jesus in Matthew seem impossible to you? Why or why not?
- Have you ever been baptized? If so, write down what you remember about being baptized. If not, what is God asking you to do in this area?
- Have you ever led someone to Christ? If so, write down the story of how it happened. If not, what do you see as the obstacles to making disciples?

Christianity is not a code,
a cause, or a creed, but Christ.

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DAY 3

RECOGNIZE HIS PRESENCE

PONDER IT

Yesterday we looked at the impossible mission Jesus gave to the disciples. But He didn't just give them a mission and then back off. He is not sitting up there in Heaven, peering down to see what we're going to do. The Gospel is what He began to do. The Book of Acts is what He continues to do.

Every good book has a hero, and the hero of this book is Jesus. He is alive and well today in His mystical body. Look at how Paul describes it in the Book of Colossians:

> **To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27).**

How it happens that Jesus lives in us is truly a mystery! If we are going to accomplish this mission, we need to recognize His presence in us, rely on His promises to us, and remember His program for us.

The Church is the body of Jesus. We are the visible part of the invisible Jesus, and He is the invisible part of the visible Church. Instead of doing things for Jesus, we need to start letting Him do something *through* us. Paul said it this way in Galatians:

> **I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me (Galatians 2:20).**

Now if you're doing things *for* Jesus, it is superficial. But if Jesus is doing something *through* you, it is supernatural. In order to live supernaturally, Jesus Christ has to be living in you, and the life you live, you live "by the faith of the Son of God" (see Galatians 2:20 in the KJV). Even the faith you have is something that He has given to you.

The Christian life is not difficult; it is impossible. But God does the impossible. If you put on Christ like you put on a coat, you will be living superficially as a cheap imitation of Jesus. The Christian life is not something we can put on and take off when we want to. It is something that changes us from the inside out.

Imagine you have a friend who is really good at golf. If this friend invited you to play, you would be very intimidated, and you would probably lose, especially if you don't play often. What if you decided that you would learn to play just like Tiger Woods? You could watch Tiger Woods play golf and even take some lessons from the same person who trained Tiger Woods. Do you think you would be able to beat your friend?

But what if you could somehow get all of Tiger Woods' talent inside of you? What if you went out on the golf course one day with your friend knowing that Tiger Woods was in you? Do you think you could play differently then?

In the same way, you can't just say, "I'm gonna be like Jesus." We need to stop strutting around like we're wonderful just because we put on a Jesus coat. If we're doing anything good, it is because Christ is *in* us.

Living the Christian life is a miracle. The first miracle of the Christian life is the new birth. The last miracle is our translation to Heaven when we're given new bodies. But in between the first miracle and the last miracle, there's a middle miracle, and that is the life that we live. Our life is to be a supernatural life.

PUT IT IN WRITING

- How would you describe the mystery of Christ *in* you? What metaphor would you use to explain it to someone?
- How does knowing that Jesus is present *in* and *through* you affect the way you read the commandment: "Go and make disciples"?

I want you to remember this: that the Christian life is not your responsibility. It is your response to His ability.

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DAY 4

RELY ON HIS PROMISE

PONDER IT

Now secondly, not only should we recognize His presence in us, but we should rely on His promise to us.

> **And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:4-8).**

His disciples asked about the future and when Jesus would establish His kingdom. But Jesus reminded them that it's not for them to know the times or seasons. Instead, He wanted them to know about the promised power. They wanted to talk about prophecy; He wanted to talk about proclamation.

Jesus was talking about a promise He made before the crucifixion and resurrection.

> **"Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).**

What is the promise of the Father? It is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. But this promise is closely related to His presence in our lives. We need to recognize His presence *in* us, and then we need to rely on His promise *to* us.

God has not given us a job that we're not able to do—a mission impossible. The disciples had no resources or power within themselves to accomplish the mission. But He did not leave them helpless; He promised them that the Holy Spirit would come.

It seems strange that Jesus would tell them to wait. But He doesn't want us to go out in our own power and strength, knocking things over and calling it working for Jesus. He wanted His disciples to wait until the Day of Pentecost because then they would have everything they needed to carry out the mission.

We do not need to wait anymore because the Day of Pentecost has come. We don't need to keep asking Jesus to send the Holy Spirit because He has sent the Holy Spirit. You receive the Holy Spirit when you believe that Jesus is Lord. Now it's time to go into all the world and make Jesus known.

PUT IT IN WRITING

- What does the promise of the Holy Spirit mean to you? How does knowing that you have the Holy Spirit impact how you feel about making Jesus known?
- What is something that you could use to remind you of this promise? Sometimes posting a visual reminder of the promise can help us remember when we need it most.

The Holy Spirit is to a Christian
what instinct is to an animal.

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DAY 5

REMEMBER HIS PROGRAM

PONDER IT

You don't have to be an intellectual or a superstar in order for God to use you. Jesus did not call you to be a lawyer; He called you to be a witness. A lawyer argues a case; a witness tells what he's seen and heard.

Many people don't witness because they haven't seen or heard anything. But a Christian who had a life-changing experience with Jesus Christ is automatically a witness. When you experience the presence and power of the living God, you can't stop telling people about it.

Sometimes people are not able to talk about Jesus because they are just not that interested. They haven't been filled with the Holy Spirit, and they haven't experienced Jesus in a real and tangible way. But when Jesus Christ is real to you, witnessing will be just as natural as talking about anything else you are passionate about.

Some people don't witness because they are afraid that someone will ask them a question that they don't have the answer to. But you don't have to know all the answers. The best answer you can give to any question is "I don't know." When you stop pretending you know things that you don't know, people will start believing you when you tell them what you do know.

Consider the blind man that Jesus healed. When the Pharisees questioned him about how a person who was born blind was able to see, he stuck to the facts:

> **He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25).**

A witness shares what he or she knows. The blind man didn't make up an answer or tell the Pharisees what they wanted to hear. He just told them what he knew. You don't have to know everything either.

This is the divine strategy: God plans to use you. God can use you with what you have. God can use you where you are. And God will supply your every need. God has made a promise to us, a solemn promise, that we would receive the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out this impossible mission.

We're to begin in Jerusalem. That's your community. And then Judea. That would be similar to your state. And then Samaria. That would be similar to the region you live in, and then to the whole world. And that's why we exist. God has given us so much, but we're not going to sit on our hands, sit and soak, and say, "What good boys and girls we are!" We need to actively reach our communities, our states, our regions and the whole world for Christ.

And so, how are we going to do it? We're going to recognize His presence in us. We're going to rely upon His promise to us. We are going to focus on His program for us; not ours. We are not going to witness about a particular church or a particular denomination. People need Jesus. Jesus said, "Witnesses to *Me*" (see Acts 1:8).

PROCESS IT

- Do you consider yourself a lawyer for Jesus or a witness for Jesus? What do you see as the difference between these two approaches for sharing Jesus?
- What has been your biggest obstacle to telling people about Jesus? What do you need to believe to overcome that obstacle?
- To whom is God asking you to witness? Does He want you to start in your hometown or your state? Is He calling you to go to your whole country or even to another nation?

The Holy Spirit never leaves a
surrendered vessel unfilled or unused.

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DAY 6

RESPOND TO HIS PROGRAM

PRACTICE IT

As we think about what God wants us to do, we need to respond to His program through us. What is His program through us?

How about your neighbors? Do your neighbors know Jesus? Do they know you're saved? Do they know that you have anything more than just a cultural Christianity? They don't care how much you know about Bible prophecy. When the apostles asked about prophecy, Jesus said, "That's not your concern. That's not for you to know. Your business is to be a witness."

Recognize His presence in you. Rely upon His power to you. Remember His program for you, and follow where He leads. We are to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the Earth. This is part of how we live supernaturally.

Can you say you are saved? Do you have a testimony? Have you seen something? Have you heard something? Do you know Jesus? Do you know by the grace of God that if you were to die right now you would go straight to Heaven?

If you could not say yes to those questions, pray this prayer and give your heart to Jesus. If you want to be saved, God will save you right where you are today. Pray this prayer:

> *Dear God, I'm a sinner. I'm lost. I need to be saved, and I want to be saved. Jesus, You died to save me, and You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You. I am a sinner. My sin deserves judgment in Hell, but I need mercy. I want grace. Jesus, You died to save me, You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust You. Like a child who doesn't know all of the answers, I trust in the finished work of Calvary. Thank You for paying for my sin. I believe that You died for me. I believe that You walked out of that grave. I believe that You're able to save me and I turn my life over to You. Begin now to make me the person You want me to be, and help me never to be ashamed of You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

PROCLAIM IT

If God has laid a particular person, area, or people group on your heart for you to witness to, you need to take the next step in helping others to know Jesus. Share with a mentor or spiritual leader what God has laid on your heart and invite that person to help you do what God is asking you to do.

If you accepted God's gift of salvation for the first time, please share your decision with another Christian you know or with your pastor. We would also like to hear about it so that we can provide you with free resources to help you grow in your new faith. Please let us know by going to **lwf.org/discover-jesus**, scrolling down the page and clicking on *I Believe*.

Two words that will change your life: "Yes, Lord."

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