
Application Guide: Acts 23

1. Warm-up (5-10 min)

Choose one:

- a. Have you ever gotten in trouble for being disrespectful to your parents? What happened?

- b. Have you ever gotten in trouble for being disrespectful to your teacher, or someone else in authority? What happened?

- c. Have you ever been commended for being nice or respectful to someone in authority? What did you do?

2. Engaging the Chapter (15-20 min)

Background: The fifth commandment says to honor your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land God has given you. It doesn't say to honor your parents if they deserve it or if they are good to you—it just says to honor, no matter what. How is this similar to the part of Acts 23 in which Paul apologizes for being disrespectful to the high priest?

Have you ever intentionally created chaos by turning people against each other, like Paul did in verses 6-10? Have you ever done this to your parents in trying to get what you want? What is the difference between what Paul did here and what you or your friends may have done to your parents? Was what Paul did here right or wrong?

How does this relate to controversies you may see happening in your church?

What kind of modern-day conflicts have you heard of church members and leaders getting into?

Why do you think that people committed to the church still get into fights? If we truly love God, shouldn't we all be able to get along?

At the end of this fight, the Lord said, "Be encouraged, Paul. Just as you have been a witness to me here in Jerusalem, you must preach the Good News in Rome as well" (vs. 11). As we have looked at the last few chapters, it seems evident that this was God's will for Paul. Can you think of a modern-day situation where the only way to witness to certain leaders is to be arrested and appear before them? How would you feel about God asking you to do this?

3. Applying the Chapter to Your Life (5-10 min)

Choose one or both:

- a. Think through your relationship with God. Is there something you think He wants you to do or someone he wants you to witness to that you are resisting? Are you being like the prophet Jonah and running away? What can you do to be more submissive to God's call on your life?
- b. Think through your life and try to identify times when God has tried to reach you with a message to do something. Journal about three instances where you felt successfully used by God. What prepared you for those times? What can you do to prepare yourself to be used by God again? Be specific.

4. Prayer Time (3-5 min)

- a. Pray for God to help you minimize controversy in your life. Ask Him to help you become a peacemaker. Try to think of a specific situation to pray for, also asking God how you can intervene and be of help.
- b. Pray for others that you know that have combative personality types. Ask God to give them peace and soften their hearts. When you are around these people, remember to pray for them to be calm and Spirit-led.