

Scripture and Background Information for October 13-19

The 40 Day Lab

When you look throughout the Bible, there is a pattern where God uses time periods of 40 days to invite people to encounter Him in a new way or for the very first time. Those 40 days were not just about learning facts about God, but they were *real-life experience* with God.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page.

Remember we have been using the updated **Discussion Guide**, because we are using longer narrative passages. However, beginning next week, we are returning to an adaptation of the original format. In the **GOD'S WORDS** section, you will be copying the scripture "word for word". In the **MY WORDS** section, you will be paraphrasing the scripture in your own words. The adaptation includes special instructions if the passage is 10 verses or longer. You can pick up copies of the new version in the Next Steps Center or from your leader.

Background for Acts 1:1-8

Acts 1:1-8 sets the stage for the rest of the book entitled, The Acts of the Apostles. Luke, the author, addresses Theophilus and lets him know of his reason for writing from the very start. Just as Luke has done in the Gospel account bearing his name, he writes an historical account of the happenings surrounding Jesus and the acts that the apostles would do after Jesus's departure.

During this 40 day period, Jesus appears to his followers and promises something greater than they have ever experienced. Jesus tells them that in some ways, they have experienced what it might be like, but they haven't experienced it in full. Forever misunderstanding Jesus, his followers ask if this will be the time that Jesus will be establishing his kingdom on earth. However, Jesus reminds them that they still have work to do by being his witnesses. For our part, this serves as a great reminder of the ways in which Jesus has equipped us and the Spirit continues to equip us to be witnesses for Jesus for our neighbors and the nations.

Scriptures for the upcoming weeks:

October 20

Ephesians 1:18-23

October 27

Ephesians 2:4-10