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Too Good Not to Share

Key References: Acts 14:1-7; *The Acts of the Apostles,* chap. 18, pp. 177-179; *The SDA Bible Commentary,* vol. 6, pp. 295, 296; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 10, pp. 69-75; Our Beliefs, nos. 11, 17, 12















Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 47.

powertext

"With the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition" (1 Thessalonians 2:2).

powerPoint

We follow Jesus when we serve others in spite of obstacles.

Have you ever tried to explain your belief in God to someone else? When? Have you ever felt embarrassed or frightened because you were a Christian? How can you follow Jesus and serve others in spite of the prejudice they may have toward you? A story from Paul's missionary journeys helps explain how the followers of Jesus may deal with challenges.

Two weary-looking men trudged toward Iconium as the sun was setting. "We had to shake the dust off of our feet as we came to the last city," said one of the travelers, smiling. "But it looks like my feet are all dusty again." He looked at his companion, hoping that a little humor would bring a smile. Their trek east over the mountains from Antioch had been a tiring one.

Paul looked up as if he had just now realized he wasn't alone. Paul was often like that, so intense he almost lost contact with the people around him. "But the believers we did leave in Antioch were so full of joy. I would go through all the hassle again just to see the looks on the faces of those who believed what we told them about the Messiah. Do you remember their joy when they realized that through Jesus, God could be right with them all the time?" Barnabas nodded in agreement.

"Well, we're almost to Iconium," said Barnabas, looking around as they headed through the small merchant stalls on the outskirts of

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Sunday

READ Read 1 Chronicles 29:11 and this week's story, "Too Good Not to Share."

LOCATE Locate Iconium on a map in your Bible.

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, 1 Thessalonians 2:2.

PRAY Pray that God will give you the wisdom to serve those who are prejudiced against Jesus' teachings.

Monday

READ Read Acts 1:8 and Acts 14:1.

EXPLAIN Explain how Acts 14:1 fulfills the prophecy of Acts 1:8.

THINK Why did Paul and Barnabas go to the Jewish synagogue in Iconium? Why is the phrase "as usual" used in verse 1?

PRAY Pray that God will use your "usual" worship habits to witness silently for Him.

Tuesday

READ Read Acts 14:2.

THINK How do you think Paul and Barnabas felt when opposition against them arose?

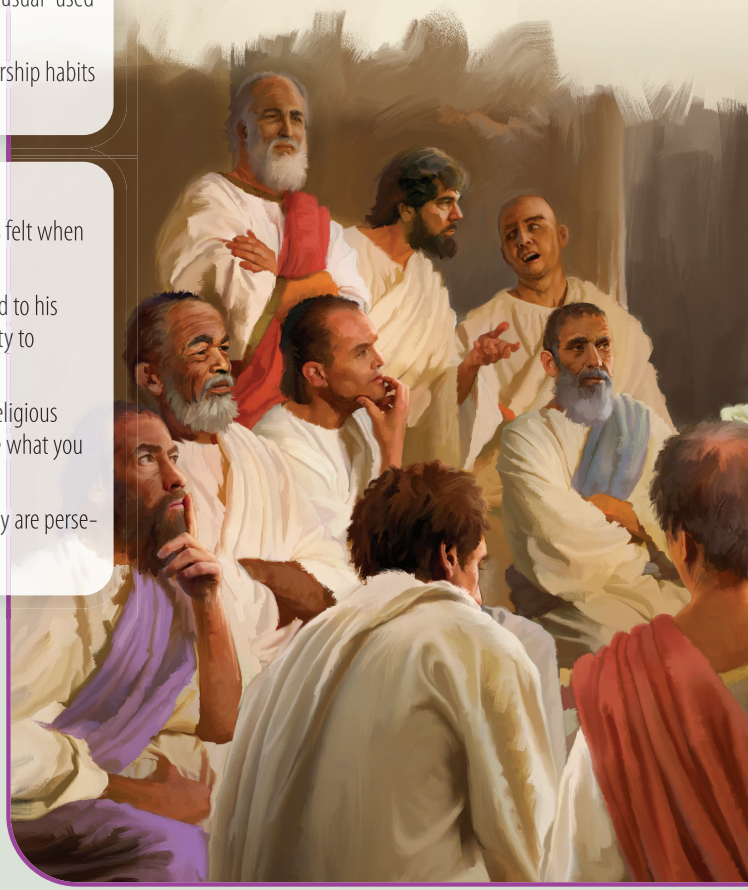
IMAGINE Imagine what Paul might have said to his fellow Jews who followed him from city to city to persecute him.

WRITE Under a parent's supervision, type "religious persecution" in an Internet search engine. See what you learn.

PRAY Pray for people in countries where they are persecuted for preaching about Jesus.

the town. "Let's ask for directions to the Jewish synagogue." They had agreed that they would begin their work in this Greek town exactly the same way they had in the larger Roman colony of Antioch. They would preach first at the synagogue, where Jews and even Gentiles were looking for the coming of the Messiah.

The synagogue worshippers were pleased to have visitors who had come from Jerusalem with messages to share. Once in a while visitors came from Jerusalem with news for the Jewish communities spread throughout these Greek hills. Often they came only to collect the



tithes and offerings to be taken back to Jerusalem. Any such visitors were always welcomed. And so were Paul and Barnabas. The first Sabbath that they were there they began sharing their good news about the Messiah.

For a time all went well. Paul preached in the synagogue several times a week. Paul and Barnabas visited Jews and Gentiles alike in their homes and at their places of business. Wherever people were interested in hearing about Jesus, Paul and Barnabas shared. But not everyone at the synagogue, nor everyone in every home or every business, felt the same way about their message. As when friends and families disagree about something important, the Jews began to argue with one another concerning Paul and Barnabas.

Many of the Jewish leaders did not believe that this wonderful message about the Messiah was true. Some of them were jealous that so many people were listening to Paul and accepting the good news. They were especially furious when God blessed the work of Paul and Barnabas with miracles to show that He was with them. The Jewish leaders who opposed the teaching about Jesus convinced many Gentiles to reject this message as well. They wanted the town officials to tell Paul and Barnabas to stop sharing the message about Jesus and



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Wednesday

READ Read Acts 14:3; 19:11, 12; and John 4:48.

NOTICE What was the purpose of using miraculous signs and wonders?

COMPARE Read Acts 5:15, 16. In your Bible study journal, compare Paul and Peter.

PRAY Pray that your God-inspired acts will draw attention to Him.

Thursday

SKIM Skim Acts 13 and 14.

IDENTIFY Identify the people who persecuted Paul in all other cities.

RESEARCH Use a New Testament map to calculate how far the Jews from Antioch traveled to follow Paul to Iconium and Lystra.

PRAY Pray for those who persecute others.

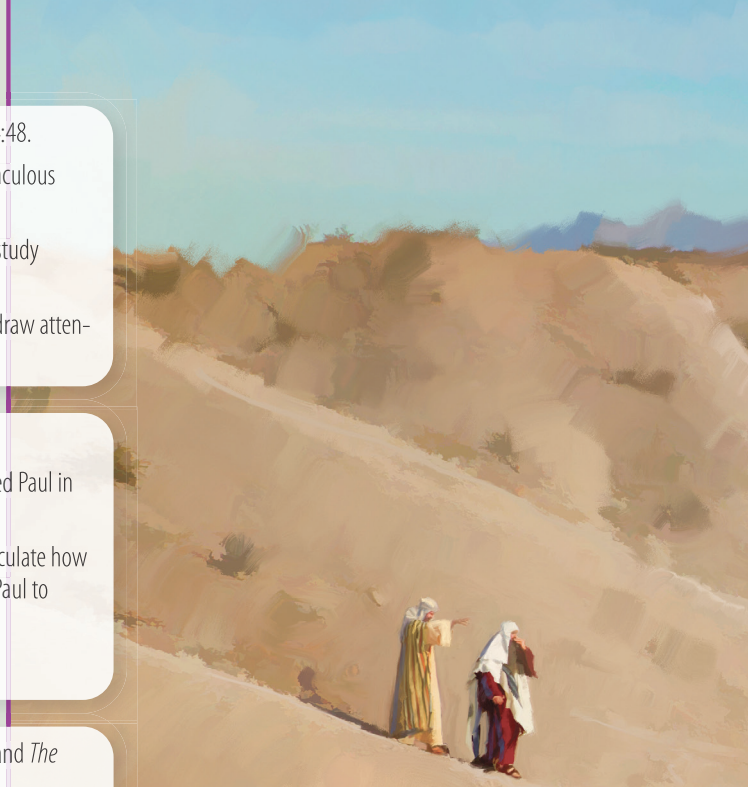
Friday

READ For family worship, read Acts 14:1-7 and *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 179.

DO Have someone stand with their heels against the wall. Place a coin on the floor 18 inches (0.5 meter) in front of their feet. Tell them to bend over, pick up the coin, and stand up without falling. Next do it in pairs. Discuss what made this exercise hard or easy.

COMMIT Make a commitment to serve God in spite of obstacles you encounter.

PRAY Thank God for friends and family who support you.



leave. Then things could go back to the way they had been. The synagogue leaders could be in charge again.

When the town authorities questioned Paul and Barnabas, or any of their followers, they found that their answers were clear and sensible. They couldn't press any charges. So many of the new believers were becoming good and orderly citizens. How could the authorities deny that? In fact, the more jealous people tried to point out what was wrong with the new message, the more people believed in it.

Finally the Jewish leaders who were so jealous and angry decided to do something about the situation themselves. They got an ignorant noisy mob



who didn't really understand what was going on and created a huge riot. They hoped it would end in the death of Paul and Barnabas. They hoped Paul and Barnabas would not have another chance to defend themselves before the authorities.

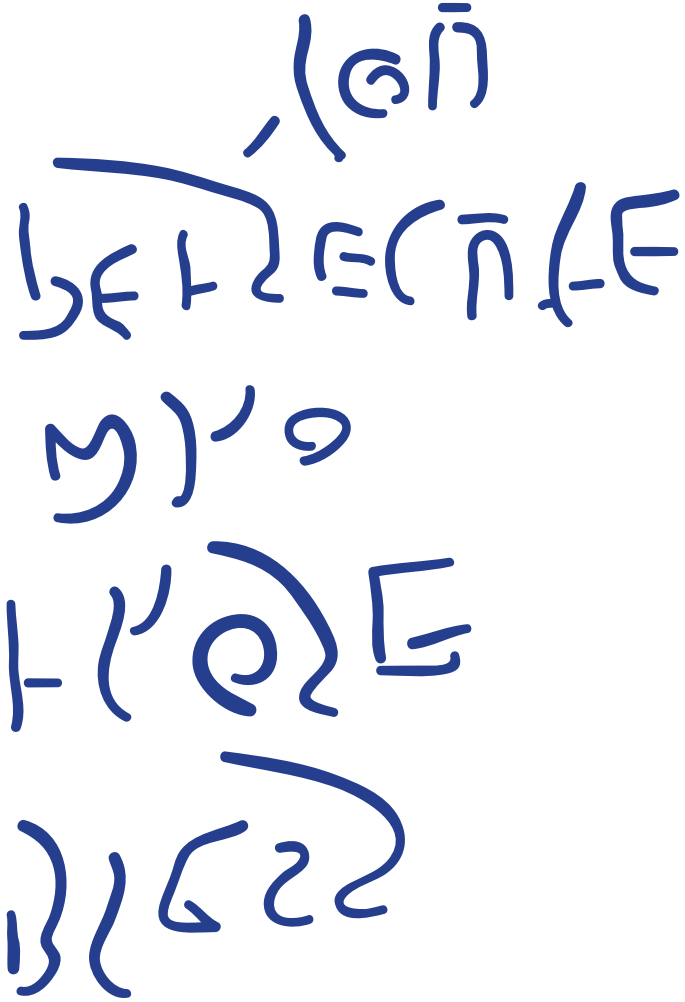
Friends of the two messengers found out about the plot. They hurried to tell Paul and Barnabas. "Don't run the risk of getting hurt by this mob," they warned. "The message you have to share about the Messiah is too wonderful. Leave for a while so you can come back and teach us later."

Paul and Barnabas did as their friends suggested. They left before the angry mob could stone them. But they would be back. The news about Jesus was too wonderful to keep to themselves.

PUZZLE 6

TREAT OTHERS AS YOU WOULD TREAT YOURSELF!

Instructions: Can you read this Bible verse that tells us how to treat people who oppose us? It's tricky!



Clue: Hold up to a mirror and turn page upside down to read.