

# IN POWERED DISCIPLESHIP

*An Inductive Study of the Book of Acts*

**Empowered Discipleship**  
**Acts 11:19-30**

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Impersonation  
or Imitation

*What's the difference?*

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## Acts 1:8

“But you will receive **POWER**  
when the Holy Spirit has come on you,  
and you will be My witnesses in  
Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria,  
and to the ends of the earth.”

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## EMPOWERED DISCIPLESHIP

Acts 11:19-21

<sup>19</sup>Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as **Phoenicia, Cyprus** and **Antioch**, telling the message only to Jews. <sup>20</sup>Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup>**The Lord's hand was with them**, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

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# Antioch

- Home to Nicolas, one of the seven deacons.
- The third-largest city in the Roman Empire, after Rome and Alexandria.
- About 20 miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea and 300 miles north of Jerusalem.
- A busy seaport trade hub possessing a lively mix of people from different cultures and religions with high intellectual and political status.
- Beautifully situated and carefully planned, it was a commercial center and the home of a large Jewish community.
- It became the base of operations for Paul's missionary journeys.



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## EMPOWERED LAYMEN

Acts 11:19-21

- ***"All except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria,"*** as a result of the persecution that broke out after Stephen's martyrdom (8:1).
- So, **laymen** from Cyrus and Cyrene founded the Antioch church!
  - ❖ *Nicolas was likely one of the founders:*
    - He was a native of Antioch, and
    - He was one of the seven deacons appointed in Jerusalem.

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## EMPOWERED LAYMEN

Acts 11:19-21

- The disciples began preaching the Gospel to the Greeks and **the Lord's hand was with them.**
  - ❖ *God supernaturally empowered their witness and large numbers of Jews and Greeks turned to Christ.*
    - ❑ *When the Lord's hand is on someone, the activity is supernaturally empowered and successful.*
    - ❑ *When the Lord removes His hand or places His hand against someone, the results are always disastrous.*



Nothing of lasting significance can be accomplished, without the supernatural empowering of the Lord.

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Acts 11:22-24

## THE VISIBLE GRACE OF GOD IN ANTIOCH

<sup>22</sup>News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. <sup>23</sup>When **he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God**, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. <sup>24</sup>He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

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## THE VISIBLE GRACE OF GOD

Acts 11:22-24

### ➤ Barnabas saw evidence of God's grace in Antioch

We often talk about experiencing or feeling the grace of God, but have you ever seen the grace of God?

❓ How does one see or witness the grace of God?

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## THE VISIBLE GRACE OF GOD

Acts 11:22-24

### ❓ What evidence of God's grace did Barnabas see?

#### Productive Discipleship (11:24)

- Great numbers converted.
- Conversion is a key sign of God's activity.

#### Serious Prayer and Fasting (13:1-3)

- When God's people truly encounter Him, they develop an insatiable appetite for regular communication with Him.

#### Spontaneous Generosity (11:27-30)

- This church responded quickly, giving generously to meet the needs of their brethren in Judea during the great famine.

#### Evangelistic Outreach (11:20, 26)

- Missionary minded laymen from Cyprus and Cyrene started the church.
- It became the home base of Paul during his missionary journeys.

#### Inclusive Fellowship (11:20)

- Jews and Gentiles regularly ate together in Antioch (Gal 2:11-12).

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## THE VISIBLE GRACE OF GOD

Acts 11:22-24

! *When God truly indwells people,  
His grace should be evident for all  
to see!*

Is there evidence of God's grace in our Church?  
Is there evidence of God's grace in our life?

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Acts 11:25-26

IMITATORS  
OF CHRIST

<sup>25</sup>Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, <sup>26</sup>and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. **The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.**

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## IMITATORS OF CHRIST

Acts 11:25-36

### ? Why were the disciples called Christians in Antioch?

- The word “**Christian**” was probably a term of derision given by the secular community to the disciples in Antioch. But why?
- Perhaps they were accusing the disciples of attempting to be “little Christs,” that is imitators of Christ.

*Oh, how I pray that we may be described likewise by the secular world today!*

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Acts 11:27-30

SHARING  
GOD'S GRACE

<sup>27</sup>During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. <sup>28</sup>One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) <sup>29</sup>The disciples, **each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea.** <sup>30</sup>This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

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## SHARING GOD'S GRACE

Acts 11:27-30

- *The believers in Antioch, having experienced the grace of God, shared freely and graciously with others in need.*
- *They responded spontaneously and immediately to the need in Judea.*

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## INPOWERED DISCIPLESHIP

- ✓ In our world today, as in Antioch of old, **God uses willing lay people** in widespread ministries.
- ✓ You have been supernaturally **IN**powered, spiritually empower and uniquely gifted to make an impact in your world, just as the disciples did in Antioch.



**When the world looks at us, do they see “little Christs” – people who strive to imitate Christ in everything they do.**

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# IN POWERED DISCIPLESHIP

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## Resilient Discipleship

**Acts 12:1-25**

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