

Growing Deeper
Only Jesus

Week One: Lasting Success
Acts 5:33-39

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Some products and companies come and go, but there are others that stand the test of time. Name one that has overcome the odds and explain why you think they have outlasted the rest.
2. Are you a trendy person, or do you prefer to purchase classic and time tested products? Why?
3. St. John Church strives to be Biblically Sound, but Culturally Relevant. How can those two values coexist?
4. Read Mark 7:5-9. How can you tell the difference between a long-standing tradition with biblical truth and one without?
5. Do you think some people equate long-standing traditions with Biblical Truth and change with error? Can you give an example?
6. What are some trends that you find difficult to accept?
7. What are some traditions that drive you crazy?
8. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be less judgmental and more patient with people whose preferences are different from your own.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

9. Read Acts 5:33. Apparently, the words of the disciples caused immediate anger in the Jewish ruling council. So much so that they wanted to have them put to death. Do you ever struggle to keep an emotional response in check?
10. What have you found most helpful to keep you from “flying off the handle?” Has that tendency in your life gotten better or worse over time?
11. Read Acts 5:34. What did Gamaliel do to gain control of the situation and allow cooler heads to prevail?

12. When you deal with a mistake in judgment, are you more critical of yourself or of others? Explain.
13. Who in your life helped you deal with things on a more reasonable level of response?
14. What do you think the description of Gamaliel means by “respected by all the people”? How do you think he came to be so respected?
15. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be slow to anger and quick to listen.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

16. Read Acts 5:33-38. Do you think it is harder to handle adversity or success? Explain.
17. List three or four hugely successful athletes, rock stars, or actors who became self-destructive.
18. Explain the term, “Be careful what you ask for.”
19. People get married, “for better or for worse.” Which do you think is harder on a relationship – success or struggle?
20. Read Proverbs 30:7-9. What’s the danger of too much too soon?
21. Explain the test that Gamaliel advised in Acts 3:38-39.
22. What’s the difference between asking God to bless what you are doing versus doing what God is blessing?
23. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to know what direction or activity God wants to bless in your life.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

24. In your experience, does faithfulness as a Christian leader always lead to success and popularity?
25. On the other hand, is popularity and success usually an indication of unfaithfulness and compromise in a Christian leader?

26. Was Jesus popular? Who didn't like Him? Do you think that holds up today... that a Christian leader may be popular with the common people but out of favor with those in religious authority? Explain why that often happens.
27. Read 2 Timothy 4:1-5. What does Paul predict about Christian leadership? Do you think those days are here?
28. How can you tell a false Christian leader from a faithful Christian leader?
29. Read about Paul's experience in Acts 17:10-11. How did the Bereans protect themselves from false teaching? Is that still good advice?
30. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for your pastor to resist the temptation of popularity in favor of faithfulness to the Lord and God's Word.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

31. Read the concluding verses in Acts 5:38-42. What assurance does Gamaliel offer to the Council about false teachers?
32. What warning does Gamaliel offer to the Council?
33. Do you think Gamaliel's advice is still relevant today? What is the danger of opposing Christian teachers who are being faithful but are doing things we don't approve?
34. What are the three most important things you look for in choosing a church or leaving a church?
35. The apostles did not escape completely unscathed. Were they upset that they had been falsely accused or falsely abused? What should be the attitude of Christian leaders today who suffer abuse despite their faithfulness to the Lord's mission?
36. Should those that are faithful expect trouble from believers? Why or why not?
37. Conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for your Christian leaders to rise above any mistreatment and consider it an honor to suffer for Jesus.