



## THE GOSPEL: CAUSING WRINKLES

Open it

1. Describe a time you felt threatened by something. How did you react?

## Daily devotions

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Acts 19:23–41

2. How would you summarize this passage? What are some of the key things that happened?
3. What stood out to you in this passage?
4. What did you learn about God from this passage?
5. What questions do you have after reading this passage?
6. Why do you think Demetrius really wanted to stop Christianity from spreading?



### Day 3

#### TODAY'S THEME: WHY PEOPLE OPPOSE THE GOSPEL—BLINDED

Read 2 Corinthians 4:3–4

Demetrius was clearly upset by the threat against his livelihood that the gospel message brought. But before we can address that problem, we have to go a little deeper and address the spiritual problems here. Demetrius (and his companions) have been blinded by the “god of this world” or the devil. And while this sounds like a pretty odd thing to think about, it seems to make some sense when you look at what’s happening. Remember that God had been performing tons of miracles through Paul to the point where people would even take garments that touched him, and people would be healed from those. So that’s what is happening and yet Demetrius is only concerned about making his money! He didn’t stop to consider that this message must be true, only that it stood as a clear threat to his job! It kind of seems silly when you look at it like that.

9. **What are some things that the devil may use to blind people’s eyes from “seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ”?**

10. **Who are some people that you know who right now are “blinded” to the truth about Jesus?**

**I HAVE A QUESTION!** ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

**PRAYER GUIDE** ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- Pray for the people you wrote down in #10, that God would reveal himself to them!
- Pray that you wouldn’t fall prey to the devil’s attempts to distract you from keeping your eyes on the prize of walking with Jesus.

## Day 4

### TODAY'S THEME: THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS

Read Acts 19:27

The temple of Artemis was roughly four times larger than the Parthenon in Athens and was listed as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and served not just as a temple for worship but as a bank where people from all over the world would come to worship Artemis and deposit funds.” It is likely that the silver idols that Demetrius and his colleagues formed would be purchased a high price and taken to be offered as worship in the temple of Artemis.

The Ephesians were very proud of the fact that they housed the grandest temple of Artemis in the whole region and guarded against it. In fact, years before Paul showed up in Ephesus, forty-five people were sentenced to death after being accused of assaulting followers of the Ephesus Artemis. They took this very seriously.<sup>2</sup>

**11. The temple of Artemis became a central focus to the people in Ephesus and the surrounding areas. What are some things in our culture today that have become idols that we treat with the same devotion as the Ephesians did the temple of Artemis?**

**12. How can we guard against falling prey to idolatry?**

**I HAVE A QUESTION!** ✎ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

**PRAYER GUIDE** ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- That you would not fall prey to idols
- That God would give you wisdom as to how to address idols in our world today
- That the gospel would advance

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<sup>2</sup> *Bible Background Commentary— New Testament*. Pg. 384–385

## Day 5

### TODAY'S THEME: WHY PEOPLE OPPOSE THE GOSPEL—THREATENED

#### Read Ephesians 5:11–17

Demetrius and his buddies felt threatened by the spreading of the gospel because they knew that the more people who believed in Jesus Christ, the fewer people would buy the idols they created, which would put them out of a job. And sometimes that is a legitimate threat to someone who doesn't know Christ. Their lives could be directly affected by the advancement of the gospel in a way that they may not want.

But even if the threat to their life isn't direct, it can still be indirect in the sense that if everyone around them begins following Christ, their evil ways will be exposed. Just the same way that if you took a lantern into a dark room and turned it on, it would reveal everything about the room that was once concealed in darkness. So what people may do is what Demetrius did, ridicule those who are doing good to try to diminish their reputation and character. Maybe you've experienced this in school where people make fun of you for being a goody two-shoes and not sharing homework answers. And that's because you want to work hard and earn your grades yourself instead of being lazy and mooching answers off someone else who has put in the work.

You'll find that these are sometimes the most "emotional" responses because they often aren't rooted in anything but how people are feeling at the time. And that just may cause a huge riot like it did in Ephesus.

#### 13. How might the gospel message threaten people?

#### 14. How would you respond to someone who was ridiculing you or what you believed in because it made them feel threatened?

**I HAVE A QUESTION!** ✍ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

**PRAYER GUIDE** ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- Boldness to stand firm for Christ even if being attacked for your faith
- Boldness to do what you know is right even if you're the only person doing it.

Note: This study guide was written by Pastors Tim Badal, Mario Arindaeng, and Jeremy Anderson, Village Bible Church. [www.villagebible.church](http://www.villagebible.church)