

A WHOLE NEW TEAM

WEEK 5

AN
ATHLETE
STUDY

UNINTENDED

During a cold New England winter in 1891, a YMCA faculty member was charged with creating an indoor game to keep track athletes in shape. Specifically, he was asked to provide "athletic distraction" with a game that had to be "fair for all players and not too rough."

James Naismith decided to use a big, soft, soccer ball asking a janitor to attach a pair of boxes to the top of poles. The janitor couldn't find boxes, but he came back with two peach baskets that Naismith could use. Naismith called his new game "Basket Ball."

Although Naismith's original 13 rules for Basketball are a far cry from today's modern game. There's no way he could imagine the impact of what he invented and the absolute legends that would emerge.

In today's passage, the Church is in full swing. The apostles had been doing many signs and wonders (Acts 2:43). Acts 3 records one such miracle. And, like so many things, there are consequences. When God's team acts in God's authority it will encourage those who trust him, but threaten those who oppose him. Like hanging peach baskets to keep some rowdy kids active, it's hard to imagine what would follow.

ACTS 3:1-10

¹ Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. ² And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate to ask alms of those entering the temple. ³ Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. ⁴ And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." ⁵ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. ⁸ And leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ and recognized him as the one who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, asking for alms. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There's power in the presence, power in the blood, power in the name of Jesus.

Today's passage records a miraculous event in the highlight reel of Acts. Jesus said in John 15:5, "Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." Scan the QR code to worship and remind ourselves of Jesus' power and presence.



DISCUSSION

Who are some of the authorities in your life to whom you submit?

1. What did the beggar ask for? (3)

2. What did the apostles give him? (6-8)

3. What response did this gift receive? (8-10, Study Notes)

4. Why do you think the religious leaders responded the way they did to this miracle? (Study Notes, Acts 4:1-4)

5. Living for Jesus is becoming increasingly unpopular. What are some possible consequences when living boldly for Jesus? What encourages you to face these consequences?

How's the challenge from Zero Week going? Have you been faithful to pray for lost friends? Have you had a chance to share? Need help, talk to your coach today!

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

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STUDY NOTES

RISE UP

There is a great athletic organization in Dallas, Texas called RISE Adaptive Sports. I once had the privilege of volunteering at an event for RISE. It was held at a skate park for kids in wheelchairs who are interested in "Wheelchair MX." While there, I met a really neat guy named Aaron "Wheelz" Fotheringham. When he wasn't doing extreme sports with Nitro Circus, he worked encouraging young people that wheelchairs do not have to be a limitation because not all athletes run. Scan the QR code to see him in action!



This guy was insane. At the skate park, he ramped off quarter pipes, did flips, you name it—all *in his wheelchair*. He is an extreme sports icon and a huge inspiration for all athletes, especially those with disabilities. I applaud him and RISE for broadening the scope of sports and showing us that we all have limitations; but, every limitation can be overcome.

The ancient world, however, was different. Physical or mental disabilities went untreated and often blamed on spiritual forces. The disabled had one option in life, to beg. They had no honor and, because of the spiritual stigma, were hardly even pitied. It was thought that they *deserved* their lot in life. Like the man we read about today, if they were lucky, as he must have been, they would have friends or family carry them to a public place so they could beg for money.

LIVING FOR CHRIST HAS CONSEQUENCES

Last week, we discussed that the Church met daily to receive the apostle's teaching, enjoy fellowship, break bread, and pray. On one of their daily visits *to the temple*, two of the most prominent apostles, **Peter and John**, walked together up the steps and came upon *a man lame from birth*.

Upon seeing the two apostles *about to go into the temple*, **he asked to receive alms**. Both Peter and John, acting just like Jesus, *directed* their **gaze at him** saying, "**Look at us.**"

Thousands must have walked past this man every day, ignoring his need. Perhaps the apostles' attentiveness to him is why the lame man **fixed his attention on them**. He was **expecting to receive something from them**.

Peter said, "**I have no silver and gold.**" That certainly must have wounded the lame man's heart. After all, money was why he sat there every day. Not wanting to tease the man, Peter

continued, "**but what I do have I give to you.**" Before the lame man could even begin to wonder what Peter could mean by his cryptic language, he heard the command under heaven's authority, "**In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!**"

Immediately, Peter **took him by the right hand and raised him up**. For the first time in his over forty years of age (Acts 4:22), **the man's feet and ankles were made strong**. The man, unsurprisingly, **leaping up, he stood and began to walk**. Then **he entered the temple**. As he did, he continued **walking and leaping and praising God**.

The reaction of the people in the temple was appropriate. **They were filled with wonder and amazement**. The consequences of this act by Peter and John were two-fold. First, the people who witnessed this man walk for first time had a whole new perspective. This man was healed in the name of Jesus Christ—a name they would surely have known by then. Most people witnessing this event probably wanted to know more about Christ and salvation. Peter then received the opportunity to share about Jesus in Acts 3:11–26 and about five thousand came to faith (Acts 4:4).

However, the second consequence is the reaction of the religious elite. In Acts 4, *while Peter and John were speaking to the people*, religious leaders *came up to them, angry because they were teaching the people and announcing in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. So they seized them and put them in jail*.

GOD'S TEAM SUBMITS TO HIS AUTHORITY

Nobody says living for Christ will be easy or comfortable. Peter and John did a great thing through the power of Christ, and they ended up in jail. If you live sold out for Christ, you may experience some consequences. You may lose relationships with friends or family. Today in America, you probably won't go to jail, but it could possibly happen at some point. Certainly, if you travel to different parts of the world, you may spend time in jail or possibly lose your life for proclaiming Christ. These things happen to our brothers and sisters every day.

When on trial for this "crime," Peter and John declared a penetrating statement, "**Whether it is right before God to obey you rather than God, you decide...**" (Acts 4:19). By whose standard and authority shall we live? If you live for yourself, you'll face the consequences by yourself. However, if you live for Christ and submit to God's authority, the consequences you face will be temporary—but your rewards, eternal.