

The Apostle Paul – Lesson 7: Get Set

Mark 14:38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

Did we learn our lesson? Study Questions from lesson 6 (On Your Mark)

1. According to Acts 9:29, who did Saul dispute with?
Answer: *The Grecians (Hellenistic Jews)*.
2. According to Acts 9:31, what two blessings did the church receive?
Answer: 1. *Fear of the Lord*, 2. *Comfort of the Holy Spirit*.
3. According to Acts 6:13, what demonstrates the reprobate character of the Hellenistic Jews?
Answer: *Willing to lie in the High Council (present false witnesses)*.
4. According to Mathew 10:28, who should humanity fear?
Answer: *Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell* (God).
5. Complete the following scripture:
Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

True / False

- True** The Holy Spirit resides in the believer for ever (JOHN 14:16)
True The Holy Spirit teaches the believer (JOHN 14:26)
True The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth (JOHN 15:26)
False Saul left Jerusalem for Cyprus (ACTS 9:30)

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You are now waiting for the signal to start – That point where all effort is aligned to poised one for action. Two images immediately come to mind:

1. The animal, such as a large cat – in the striking position, waiting for the prey to be the most vulnerable
This is the competition (Satan) – ready to consume, with no thought for the prey
1 Peter 5:8 ... your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour
2. The runner, at the beginning of the race – set in the starting position, with the entire body tense in preparation of that moment of commitment
This is the believer – Ready to apply all for the sake of the event
2 Timothy 4:2 be instant in season, out of season.

Although similar, the first is to the destruction of others, while the second is to the reward of effort (there is no 'second place' between predator and prey).

Background (Acts 10 [all] and Acts 11:1-25), the Apostles discover that the Holy Spirit is also given to the Gentiles (those not under the law):

Acts 11:18 Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

With the grace of God being seen by Barnabas in Antioch (Acts 11:20-24), Barnabas knew what he had to do:
Galatians 1:21-24 – What Saul was doing while away from Jerusalem

- (21) Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;
- (22) And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ;
- (23) But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.
- (24) And they glorified God in me.

While the Apostles were being prepared by the Lord to accept the Gentiles as fellow believers, Saul was preaching and teaching in Syria and Cilicia, with his home in Tarsus as his base:

- Reaching out with Christ in the land of his youth
- The churches knew of the reputation of ‘Saul’, but did not know him personally
- Saul established a new testimony (as a new creature), where he was known for ‘preaching the faith’ in God through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ
- God was glorified through the work of Saul

As I read of Saul’s change, how his testimony transformed, I can’t help but consider – what am I known for?

- At church, I am a Christian first, and many other things after
- Out of church –
 - Am I viewed as a Christian first?
 - Does my reputation as a believer in Jesus Christ precede me?
 - Is God glorified through me?

Acts 11:25-26 – Time to call Saul

- (25) Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

The reputation of Saul’s faith is strong in the heart of Barnabas, as he quickly determines the right man for this task (reaching out to the people of Antioch) to be the man who was once feared for his fierce persecution of believers of Jesus Christ.

- Barnabas must persuade Saul to leave his ministry out of Tarsus for a greater mission field.
- By now, Saul has established himself among local believers as a leader, not only spending time in the Word of God, but bringing God to others through Jesus Christ.

Saul must have had some very strong ties to each church – He ministered directly, building close relationships among believers

- (26) And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Saul agrees to accompany Barnabas to Antioch, and the two achieve remarkable results:

- A year together in service, Saul and Barnabas become a very effective team

Galatians 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Being involved in ministries is a very effective path of growth for a believer

Many hands make light work (English proverb – early 1300's)
 People working together create 'synergy' - where the combination is greater than the sum:

- Individual efforts are combined (the simple sum of effort)
- The group motivates each other (a multiplier)
- The group builds relationship bonds (a multiplier)
- The group reaches many more (a larger audience)(a multiplier)
- A group of believers is embodied in the Holy Spirit (no limit)

It is more than a blessing to support each other in ministry, it is a necessity for glorifying God:

Matthew 22:39 Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself

Service is an act of love – sharing in the burden of ministry glorifies God

- Both Saul and Barnabas are more than reaching people, they have ‘assembled themselves with the church’, signifying a strong commitment to the work

James 2:18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works

The two are not laboring for reward (as for favor with God in righteousness), but out of love for:

- God (to do His will)
- Fellow believers (bringing fellowship and service - comfort)
- Unbelievers (bringing God, and the hope of life)

Faith should produce ‘work’ – The acts resulting from the love for God (love is an action)

- The two men are actively engaged in expounding on the Word of God, in teaching others of the scriptures, the significance of prophesy, and their fulfillment through Christ

2 Timothy 2:15-16 – The method of teaching

(15) Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

- Encouraging believers to pursue understanding, that with the Spirit of Truth, God will reveal His will and be glorified

(16) But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

- Idle chatter, gossip, story-telling and other distractions can divide – build an obstacle between a believer and their ability for service, by willfully obscuring the truth

- The assembly achieves recognition – They are now known as believers – Followers of the Holy Christ – to be called ‘Christians’!

Their behavior / testimony established them – set them apart from others, not simply as a group who pursue the truth of God, but, in faith, act on that belief.

Today, many are known as ‘Christian’ solely on the building that they go to on Sunday, or by the family they were born into.

Unfortunately, it is not often associated with behavior or testimony.

Saul has been guided by Barnabas in service, and he is about to change the course of humanity!

Next Lesson: Go!

Lesson 7: Get Set

Study Questions

1. According to Acts 11:18, what revelation did the Apostles discover?

2. According to Galatians 1:21, what two regions did Saul minister in?

1. _____ 2. _____

3. According to Acts 11:25, who decided to seek the help of Saul?

4. According to Acts 11:26, where was the first church to be called ‘Christian’?

5. Complete the following scripture:

Matthew 22:39 Thou shalt _____ thy neighbor as _____.

True / False

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| T | F | Satan is compared to a devouring lion. |
| T | F | Barnabas went to Antioch to seek Saul. |
| T | F | Barnabas and Saul ministered in Antioch for a full year. |
| T | F | Believers are encouraged to show their faith through works. |