

The Apostle Paul – Lesson 8: Go! (The First Heat)

John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Did we learn our lesson? Study Questions from lesson 7 (Get Set)

1. According to Acts 11:18, what revelation did the Apostles discover?
Answer: Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.
2. According to Galatians 1:21, what two regions did Saul minister in?
Answer: 1. Syria, 2. Cilicia.
3. According to Acts 11:25, who decided to seek the help of Saul?
Answer: Barnabas.
4. According to Acts 11:26, where was the first church to be called 'Christian'?
Answer: Antioch.
5. Complete the following scripture:
Matthew 22:39 Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

True / False

- True** Satan is compared to a devouring lion (1PET 5:8)
False Barnabas went to Antioch to seek Saul (ACTS 11:25)
True Barnabas and Saul ministered in Antioch for a full year (ATCS 11:26)
True Believers are encouraged to show their faith through works (JAM 2:18)

Lesson 8: Go!

You can almost hear the report of the starting gun, as Saul takes off from the starting line – To begin his race! Action is applied to training and experience, as one leaps into the fray, and all is for the 'prize'!

Paul often compares service to the Lord as a runner in a race, for surely a prize awaits the finisher of the race. Before diving into the mission trips of Paul, a closer look at the 'race':

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 – The Prize

- (24)** Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.
(25) And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

The prize for the race is eternal – to be an everlasting achievement for the believer in the eyes of God.

This is a race between two people (not you against the whole world):

- The first 'runner' is the spiritual 'you' – Running toward God
- The second 'runner' is the worldly 'you' – Running away from God

The competition is very tough!



Romans 7:18-19 – The strength of the competition

(18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

(19) For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

- The flesh is not good - it will pull you away from the prize
- The flesh is strong – it has power enough to counter your effort
- The flesh is relentless – it will never give up (as long as it is living, it will resist)

How can this competitor be beat?

Hebrews 13:6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

- The Lord Jesus Christ is the source of the believer's strength (the stronger your faith, the better your race), and it is His strength that will overcome that of the world.

1 Corinthians 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

- Knowing the nature of your flesh, take action to get it under control. Each person has their 'favorite weakness' (even Paul noted it was difficult for him in ROM 13). This weakness will be the tool your flesh uses to distract you from the race.

Romans 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

- o The unsaved – To be in the race without Christ is to be beaten because the flesh cannot and will not seek God
- John 14:6** Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**
- God cannot be 'found' without Christ

Matthew 19:26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, **With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.**

Hebrews 12:1 – About the 'race'

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us

- This event is more of a marathon than a sprint:
'Patience' is the key word that inspires the believer that, though there will be obstacles and challenges, faith should be the nourisher of your soul, keeping you 'fresh' as you pursue your course

Acts 11:27-30 – Events in the meantime (famine in Jerusalem)

(27) And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch

(28) And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

There is a devastating famine in Jerusalem – No local sources of food, no convenience stores, markets or shops available for supporting everyday needs (the shelves are bare) – A time where people are often faced with the choice of leaving everything they own (possibly losing their inheritance) or staying with the risk of death.

(29) Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

Those in Antioch communed and determined there must be something they could do to help those in Jerusalem to sustain, by bringing provisions for relief (remember, 'love' is an action word):

- According to 'ability' – Some provide money, some provide food, some provide labor: All provide something.

James 2:15-17 – Illustration why service is a result of faith

(15) If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

(16) And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

(17) Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

James notes that your behavior reveals your commitment to, and faith in, God – If you are not willing to help your brothers/sisters, are your professions of faith of the heart, or just words?
(again – talk is cheap)

(30) Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

'To their ability', both Barnabas and Saul offer to serve as the deliverers of the gift to the believers in Jerusalem, to be the vehicle of hope that comes from the love of God.

Acts 13:1-4 – Saul and Barnabas depart: The first heat (missionary journey) begins!

(1) Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

1 Corinthians 12:12, 27 - Believers, take special note: This is a team activity

(12) For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ.

(27) Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Remember, you are not in this race alone, but are part of a team (one in Christ)

(2) As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

(3) And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

(4) So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

The Holy Spirit called both Barnabas and Saul for the work – The 'team' made preparations through prayer and commenced what would become Paul's first of three missionary journeys.

As you walk in faith, the Lord will present you will opportunity to 'run' (maybe a little, maybe a lot). Be prepared to recognize this to be able to act. If you allow your flesh to have the advantage, you may miss on truly wonderful blessings and rewards.

Next lesson, we will begin examining the missionary journeys.

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Study Questions

1. According to 1 Corinthians 9:25, what is the nature of the believer's prize?

2. According to Romans 7:18-19, who is your competitor?

3. According to Hebrews 13:6, who is your helper?

4. According to Acts 11:27-30, why did Barnabas and Saul return to Jerusalem?

5. Complete the following scripture:

1 Corinthians 12:27 Now ye are the _____ of Christ, and _____ in particular.

True / False

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| T | F | Saul struggled with his flesh nature. |
| T | F | Christ is one of many ways to find God. |
| T | F | All believers are part of the body of Christ. |
| T | F | Barnabas was chosen for the mission by the Apostles. |