



September 9, 2023



Sabbath
FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** " 'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen" (Matthew 28:19, 20, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 17, Spiritual Gifts and Ministries:** "According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people."
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 20, 21

HEROES OF FAITH: PAUL

"After Jesus Himself, the apostle Paul was the most powerful and most influential voice in the Christian church. Paul was born in an ultra-conservative Jewish family in the Greek city of Tarsus, in the southern section of Asia Minor. Growing up in two worlds, Greek and Jewish, uniquely prepared Paul for his later work of proclaiming the gospel.

"As Paul told an assembly of Pharisees and Sadducees, 'I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee' (Acts 23:6, NKJV). The Pharisees were the strictest of all Jews and fierce persecutors of Christians. They were militant in the protection of Jewish orthodoxy.

"About A.D. 35, just five years after Jesus' crucifixion, Paul journeyed to Damascus with letters from the high priest, declaring that Christians were criminals worthy of death. He was probably about 30 years old at the time. God chose that moment to change the entire course of Paul's life. The Lord appeared to him in a vision, declaring, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' (Acts 9:4).

"Blinded by the glorious light, prostrate on the ground, Paul could only ask, 'Who are You, Lord?' A voice came from heaven: 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting' (verse 5).

"Paul was never the same again. Meeting Jesus transformed his life. He committed his entire life to proclaiming the Christ he loved.

"The apostle Paul was compelled to share his faith as widely as possible. He centered his efforts on the major cities of Asia Minor. He traveled the Mediterranean world from his hometown in Tarsus throughout Syria, Arabia, Greece, and Turkey. His first missionary journey, beginning in Antioch, took him on a 1,200-mile trek preaching the Word. His next journeys took him yet farther. On these frequent journeys he was stoned, beaten with rods, imprisoned, shipwrecked, hunted by wild beasts, robbed, and left for dead. But he kept witnessing for his Lord (2 Corinthians 11:24-27).

"Paul's faith made a difference. His commitment to Jesus transformed his life. To Paul, faith was an active, dynamic, living reality that led him to share the Christ he loved with everyone he met.

"Does your faith make a difference in your life? Is it the transforming power that influences everything you do? Is the living Christ the center of your life as He was Paul's?

"Today, let the living, loving, life-transforming Christ be the center of your life too" (Mark Finley, *Solid Ground* [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2003], p. 210).

When we surrender to Christ and allow Him to use us, not only will we grow, but we will see great things happen!

Sunday
RESPONDING

- » Read 1 Peter 3:15.
- » Your youth group is going to sing, with mikes and speakers and everything, in the local park as an outreach for your city. You're not much of a singer, and you know that kids from school hang out at that park. What will they think of you? Should you conquer your fear and go?
- » Some witnessing activities will make you feel uncomfortable. Should you do them anyway? Why or why not? How can you tell if you're stepping out of your comfort zone or participating in an activity that's just not right for you?

Monday
BIBLE ANSWERS ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND MINISTRIES

- » Read 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.
- » Everyone has received from God talents, gifts, and abilities that are unique to each individual. Will you develop your gifts and abilities to be used to help others come to know Christ? What a blessing it is to use our individual talents as a witness for Christ! And to one day see souls in God's kingdom because of how we let God use us!
- » How will you use your talents, gifts, and abilities this week as a witness for Christ?

- » "Every one who loves God is to testify of the preciousness of His grace and truth" (Ellen G. White, *In Heavenly Places*, p. 92).
- » Find and fill in the missing sections. The scripture is from the New King James Version.

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us,
 _____: if prophecy, _____
 _____ in proportion to our faith; or ministry,

 _____; he who teaches, _____; he who ex-
 horts, _____; he _____,
 _____; he _____; he
 _____" (Romans
 12:6-8).



Tuesday

REFLECTING

- » Read Mark 16:15.
- » Some teens are about making a statement with external things to show who they are (clothes, hair, friends, possessions, activities, music). Usually this type wants to be noticed. Others are trying not to stick out. They prefer not to be noticed. They like to work in the background. Have you figured out which one you prefer?
- » Sometimes this choice is conscious, driven by a desire to be unique and to express yourself or by a fierce longing not to be noticed. Your choice will depend largely on your personality. It will affect how you fit in and deal with life, not only in school, but also at church. You may already notice that some youth group activities make you feel shy and uncomfortable, while others get you excited about sharing Christ with others. You can use these feelings to begin to figure out your own personal witnessing style.
- » God asks us to witness for Him, but He doesn't tell us how we have to do it. We can be joyous and outgoing for His cause or we can do radical, behind-the-scenes work and let others make the really big splashes. It all depends on where we feel most comfortable. Every now and then it can be beneficial—and fun!—to stretch the limits of your comfort zone. You might even find something new that you enjoy participating in. Usually, though, we're most effective doing what we feel comfortable with.
- » Now is a great time to explore witnessing and to discover your style. Take a few witnessing risks. Try something you may not have tried before or think you wouldn't be comfortable doing, such as singing in the youth group or passing out literature at the mall. Dare to step out in faith for God and see what happens. Remember, you are never alone. Besides, you may discover a witnessing style you never knew you had.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Look up the following texts. In them you will find answers to the following questions. Answers will be found using the New King James Version.

Hebrews 11:7 Hebrews 10:37-39 Mark 16:15 Luke 6:20-23
 Luke 19:9, 10 Philippians 3:8 Philippians 1:21

1. What did Noah do by faith?

2. How should the "just" live?

3. Where and to whom should we preach the good news?

4. Whom did the Son of man come to seek and to save?

5. Why was Paul glad to let things be lost from his life?

6. What does Paul say is to live?

7. And to die?

8. What are the reasons you should "rejoice" and "leap for joy"?

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read Ephesians 6:10-19.
- » Review the memory text.
- » When it comes to sharing your faith, you'll find most people have an opinion about how it should be done. You could face criticism from those who think you are too forward, not forward enough, too radical, not radical enough, too safe, or not safe enough. But remember—how you share your faith is between you and God.
- » If you receive criticism about how you witness to others, talk to people you trust: your parents, pastor, and youth group leader. Get their advice. Be open to suggestions. But if the criticism is not constructive, they can support you and help you.
- » Remember that when you are witnessing, you're out on the front lines of the battle between Christ and Satan. In a war the soldiers on the front lines are under the heaviest fire and in the gravest danger. In a spiritual battle it's the same. Satan's heaviest attacks will fall where God's people are doing the most good. Prepare for this by praying. Only prayer and open communication with God will be effective against Satan's attacks. But the good news is that this war is already won.

Friday

APPLYING

- » Read Philippians 1:21.
 - » Take the comfort zone challenge. List three witnessing opportunities that are available to you right now.
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 - » Now choose one that you consider to be a stretch, something you would not ordinarily like or feel really comfortable doing. During the next week, do it and write your reflections below.

What I did: _____

What I thought about it: _____

 - » Rate this activity on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being "new fave," 10 being "never try again")

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- If all goes really well, or not so well, try repeating the challenge and choosing a different activity this time.

