



## VBS 2013

**BIBLE STUDY WEEKEND / LOCK IN**

Aug 30 – Sept 1

*Study Booklet*

**I Belong to:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Day 1: DARE TO CHANGE

**BIBLE PASSAGE :** Acts 9:1-19

**VBS BIBLE SCRIPTURE :** 2 Tim 1:7

**For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love and sound judgment. (HCSB)**

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. (NIV)

### Comparing the lives of Saul and Ananias

	SAUL	ANANIAS
GOD SPOKE		
POSSIBLE FEARFUL RESPONSE(S)		
EVIDENCE OF CHANGE		

**STOP AND CONSIDER**

*All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on his name? (Acts 9:21)*

What changes has Christ made in your life since you put your trust in Him ? Even if you received Him as a child, how is He continuing to change you ..... as recently as today ?

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How do you react to your seemingly constant need for repentance and refinement? Does it drive you crazy ? Does it discourage you? Or does it comfort you to know that He's all willing to keep working on you ?

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Are there elements of your reputation that make it hard for you (especially at work or within your family) to relinquish visible control of your life in Christ ?

What patterns of expected behaviour present the toughest obstacles to overcome ?

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What attitudes or actions do you think God wants you to change as a result of studying His Word ?

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Describe one way you will be obedient to what God is showing you through this Bible Study.

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## Day 2: DARE TO SPEAK UP

### **BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 9:19b-30**

Luke follows the remarkable story of Saul's conversion with some details about Saul's first steps as a Christian. Even at this early stage he shows the traits that will be characteristic of his later efforts in carrying the gospel to the world.

1. How long did Saul wait before He began proclaiming Jesus (verse 20)? Would it have taken a lot of courage for Saul to do this? Explain your answer.
2. Why were people amazed at Saul's behavior (verse 21)?
3. What did Saul give up in order to be a Christian (consider **Philippians 3:4-7**)?
4. How did the Jews in Damascus react to Saul's teaching (verses 22-23)? Why would they react this way?

According to **2 Corinthians 11:32**, who else in Damascus was involved in the plot against Saul?

5. How did Saul escape the plot against him (verses 24-25)?
6. Read **Galatians 1:15-19**. How long was it before Saul came to Jerusalem?

Where had he gone in the meantime?

**Note:** Most commentators think this trip took place during the "many days" mentioned in 9:23, and that it was after his return to Damascus that the Jews plotted against Saul.

7. When Saul came to Jerusalem, why did the disciples not receive him (verse 26)?
8. Does a local church have the right not to accept someone into its fellowship? Explain your answer.
9. What did Barnabas do for Saul (verse 27)?
10. How did the Hellenistic Jews in Jerusalem react to Saul's teaching (verse 29)? Why? How did Saul escape the plot against him (verse 30; 22:17-21)?
11. In just this chapter we have seen Saul endure two plots against his life. What are some lessons we can learn from these events?

Comments & Notes:

**Saul in Damascus (Acts 9:19b-25)**

When did Saul begin to preach about Jesus?

What did he preach about?

What had Saul previously been upset about?

What could explain this difference?

He was wishy-washy.

He was easily swayed and changed his mind often.

He was pretty sure that he might have been wrong and Jesus might be the Son of God.

He was thoroughly convinced that he had been wrong before and that Jesus was the Son of God.

News about Saul and his attitude towards Christians had reached Damascus. After all, Ananias had heard about him and the trouble he caused the believers (verses 13 and 14). Additionally, Ananias knew why Saul had come to Damascus (verse 14). Since Ananias knew this, it is likely that many residents of Damascus knew about Saul and why he had come to Damascus.

Given this, who would have been astounded by this sudden change?

No one

The Jews

The Christians

Everyone

What do you think is meant by "Saul grew more and more powerful" in verse 22?

Saul's preaching was so persuasive that the local Jews decided to get rid of him by killing him. How did Saul escape?

### **Saul in "Arabia" (Galatians 1:13-18)**

According to the letter that Saul later wrote to the church in Galatia, where did he go after he left Damascus?

When did Saul finally go to Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 9:26?

"Arabia" probably refers to kingdom of Nabatea, which was south of Damascus and southeast of Palestine. The capital of Nabatea was Petra. Petra was a city built into rock cliffs, and is about 60 miles south of the Dead Sea. Nabatea was originally Edom and Moab, but conquered between 500 and 300 BC by Arabians. It isn't clear whether Saul went to Arabia between verses 22 and 23, or between verses 25 and 26. According to the letter to the Galatians, Saul returned to Damascus, then went to Jerusalem. Thus, the plot against him could have been before he went to Arabia, or after he return to Damascus from Arabia. However, 2 Corinthians 11:32 suggests that perhaps Saul had angered both the local Damascans and the King of the Nabateans, and both plotted against him in Damascus. This suggests that the plot may have occurred after he'd spent 2-3 years in Nabatea.

### **Saul in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-30)**

Even three years after his conversion to Christianity, Saul is still feared by the disciples in Jerusalem. What does this suggest about Saul's activities before he had left Jerusalem?

How many "good things" do you have to do to "make up for" a bad past?

What had to happen for Saul to finally be accepted by the local believers?

Barnabas was willing to testify on Saul's behalf, and based upon Barnabas' acceptance of Saul, the other believers finally accepted him also. Saul was accepted because of Barnabas' influence. What influence can you have on whether others are accepted or rejected?

Who do you know that needs a friend, acceptance or encouragement?

What does Saul start to do in Jerusalem?

What is the reaction?

How did Saul escape this time?

### **Application: What Does It Mean To Me Today?**

Discuss what you've learned from this lesson that you can apply to your life

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**Day 3: DARE TO BELIEVE**

**In this box, draw a roller coaster that represents your life. Include experiences like:**

- One of your greatest highs  
(example, being a parent)
- One of your greatest lows
- A steep, sudden dip in your life
- A steep, sudden climb
- A sharp turn or loop
- A personal dark tunnel

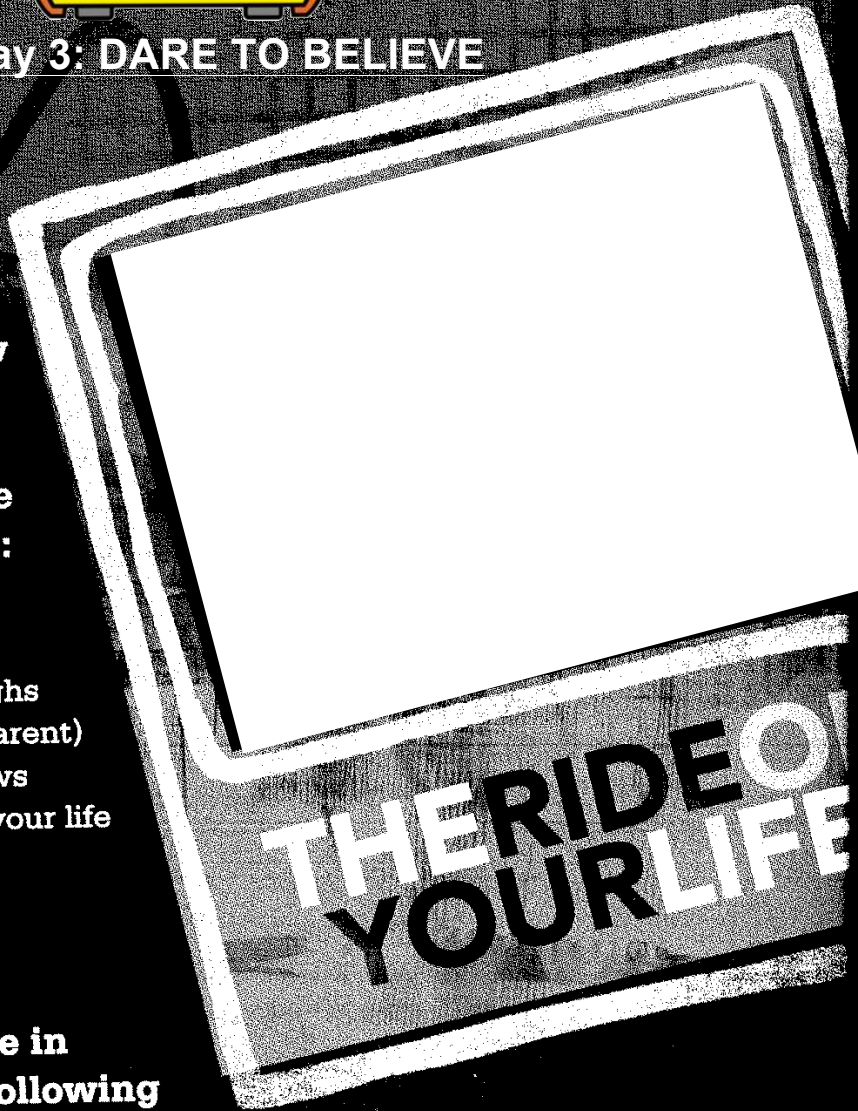
**If you already believe in Jesus, which of the following characterizes your life today?**

**Place a check mark by all that apply.**

- I express my faith in Jesus when I help others.
- When I express my faith in Jesus, I may upset or anger others.
- When I express my faith in Jesus, I may suffer.
- I express my faith in Jesus when I witness to others.
- I express my faith in Jesus by helping others and by rejoicing.
- I express my faith in Jesus when I praise God even in difficult circumstances.

If you have not believed in Jesus, turn to the inside front cover of this Learner Guide and read "Trusting Jesus." It tells you how you can dare to believe in Jesus as Savior. Talk with another Christian, maybe one of the park guides, now or after the session.

Describe one way you will express your faith in Jesus this week.





Review the Scripture passage. Add any significant events.

Which character are you most like in the way you think, feel or act? Why?

If you could interview Paul and Silas, what would you like to ask them about their experiences in these passages?

What hymn or songs, if any would you sing if you were in a dark prison because of your faith in God? Why this one?

Think of one way you can express your faith in Jesus in at least one of the following areas:

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Helping others

Praising God

Witnessing to others

Helping others and rejoicing

## BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 20:17- 23:11



### Day 4: DARE TO SERVE FAITHFULLY

Review the Scripture passage. Add any significant events.

What do you think you would do if a close friend or family member tried to discourage you from doing what you believe God wants you to do? What if this direction might involve danger to you or others?

Look up the word faithful in a dictionary. Write some of the words or phrases below. Now write your own definition of faithful service to God

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Read the outline headings from today's Bible study below

- \_\_\_ Faithful service in testimony
- \_\_\_ Faithful service despite warnings
- \_\_\_ Faithful service when friends fear for us
- \_\_\_ Faithful service for life

Rate the extent to which the above are true in your life today on a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being weak and 10 being strong.

Make a commitment to allow God to help you serve Him faithfully in one of the above areas. Share your commitment with another Christian and ask that person to pray for you in specific ways.

## **BIBLE PASSAGE: Acts 27:1-44**



### **Day 5: DARE TO TRUST**

Review the Scripture passage. Add any significant events.

What is one of the most difficult things you have faced (or are facing) in your life? What made it so difficult?

List responses people might make to such circumstances

What responses do you think might reflect trust in God in spite of your life circumstances?

Write a prayer acknowledging you want to trust in God instead of giving in to your fears during difficult circumstances

Describe one specific thing you can do (or avoid doing) to help you respond in trust instead of fear in the future

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