



Beautiful and Beloved – Enneagram and Understanding
“The Apostle Paul, and the Good Person – Type 1”

Weekly Memory Verse: But God showed His love to us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Romans 5:8

Family Activity for the Week: God has called each of us to follow and serve him in some way. In the Bible, Paul received a call to follow God and share Jesus with others. Discover how God is calling your family to serve. Draw a picture of a large gift on a piece of paper. Invite each person to share pictures or words representing abilities, skills and gifts each family member has that could be used to serve and share Jesus with others. Also include ways your family has served others in the past. When everyone is finished, discuss what theme stands out. Choose one way your family will answer God’s call to serve and select a date on your calendar to live it out. Pray and ask God to help you answer God’s call in your lives.

Daily prayer for this week: This week we invite you to say this prayer after the readings and reflections. Then on Saturday to reflect on how this prayer and the readings have impacted you.

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.
~Thomas Merton

Monday, September 28 – Read Acts 7:54-8:3; 9:1-9, 20-22. A man with the Hebrew name Saul entered the book of Acts as almost a bit player, holding other people’s coats. He quickly became prominent as a driven, (Message Notes and Meditation Moments for September 26-27, 2020 – For more, go to www.summitdurango.org)

deadly persecutor of early Christians. A stunning encounter with the risen Christ utterly changed his life. Before long, he began using his Roman name, Paul (cf. Acts 13:9). He remained passionate and driven, but now as a preacher arguing persuasively that Jesus was, in fact, the long-awaited Messiah.

- ▲ In Saul's background, nearly every person he respected, from the high priest down, rejected Jesus and saw Christians as a threat to God's truth. No wonder he set out, with great passion, to destroy a faith he saw as seriously wrong. Did your background and training make it easy or hard for you to trust in Jesus? How well are you able to understand and relate to people with backgrounds different from yours?
- ▲ Paul did not think his meeting with Jesus on the road to Damascus was "just a vision," an illusory, inward incident. He believed he'd met the risen Christ just as "really" as any other apostle (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:5-9). At the end of her song "Redeemer," Nicole C. Mullen said, "He lives (I spoke to Him this morning)." How easy or hard do you find it to believe Jesus is risen and alive? Where have you experienced the risen Christ recently?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, you called Saul, and that call changed his life. He went on to change millions of lives by his preaching and writing. Give me listening ears and an open heart in this series, so that Paul may change my life for the better. Amen.*

Tuesday, September 29 Read Acts 22:1-21. Years later, Paul's travels preaching Christ all over the Roman Empire and made him some very obsessive enemies. Seeing him in the Temple in Jerusalem, they stirred up a mob scene so violent that Roman soldiers had to rescue Paul (Acts 21:27-36). But, far from intimidated, Paul saw this as a chance to tell the mob of his life-long passionate loyalty to God, and the meeting with Jesus that changed his life.

- ▲ A common rabbinic prayer, one Paul himself had undoubtedly prayed during his early life, said, "Lord, I thank you that I was not born a Gentile." The mob in Jerusalem was angry because Paul had spent years preaching to Gentiles, a mission he said God gave him. Who are the people you're thankful you aren't? How can you learn to love them more?
- ▲ Paul told of a Christian named Ananias who conveyed God's call to him. Acts 9:10-18 also told the story, but more from Ananias' point of view, showing the courage and faith it took for him to go to a man who had come to town to imprison and maybe kill him. Has God ever called you to do something good that nevertheless scared you and called for some courage? If God called you to an "Ananias" mission today, how do you believe you'd respond?

Prayer: *Lord, If Ananias had said "no," I suspect you'd have found someone else to reach out to Paul. But Ananias would have missed the chance to be part of something great. Help me not to miss your call, or to fail to answer. Amen.*

Wednesday, September 30 – Read Galatians 1:11-24. Paul did some of his first church planting work in the region of Galatia. Then he learned that other teachers had gone to Galatia and were telling his Gentile converts that Paul's gospel was incomplete because he did not enforce Jewish ceremonial laws or require Gentile men to be circumcised (cf. Galatians 4:10, 5:2). In a spirited, emotional response, Paul insisted that he got his gospel directly from Christ, not from human sources.

- ▲ Paul told his Galatian readers that, ironically, he had been more zealous (typical of enneagram type Ones!) for Jewish rituals than his critics, and that he had learned that type of religion from human teachers. The good news of grace he preached, he said, was what came through "a revelation from Jesus Christ." In what ways has God changed or totally re-oriented your thinking? Was that process easy, or did you have to "wrestle it out" with God? Where is God inviting you to continue that process?
- ▲ Paul quoted Christians in Judea: "The man who used to harass us now preaches the faith that he once tried to destroy" (verse 23). Luke told more about that part of the story. The Judeans

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accepted Paul because Barnabas, whom they did trust, vouched for Paul's honesty (cf. Acts 9:26-28). How can you be a "Barnabas," supporting others and smoothing the way for them to do the ministry work God has called them to?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, at times it's still tempting for me to think that my own good deeds will be enough to impress you, to win my salvation. Keep me grounded in the good news you revealed to Paul, and trusting in your grace rather than my goodness. Amen.*

Thursday, October 1 – Read Romans 11:1, 9:1-8. Paul loved his Hebrew heritage. Seeing many of his people (though certainly not all of them) reject Jesus as Messiah hurt him. He wrestled with the question, "Had God rejected God's people?" He found a key in the Genesis 21 story of Abraham's two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. Both were genetically Abraham's children, but only Isaac was the son of promise. Their story showed, Paul said, that "descent" from Abraham was spiritual, not just genetic.

- ▲ Scholar William Barclay said Paul concluded "there is more to Jewishness than descent from Abraham, that the chosen people were not simply the entire sum of all of Abraham's physical descendants." Paul also told his Galatian converts that "if you belong to Christ, then indeed you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). How much do you understand about the Hebrew, Old Testament roots of your faith? How might you learn to know and value that more highly?
- ▲ Have you ever had—perhaps have now—someone you care about deeply who just doesn't see the same importance of faith in Christ that you do? Does that cause you grief or concern, as it did Paul? Is there any part of your family or faith heritage that you care about, and yet have felt the need to move away from? Paul loved God, if anything, even more passionately as a Christian than as a Pharisee. What underlying, deeper parts of your heritage can you honor even if you live them in a different way?

Prayer: *Lord God, it's remarkable to trace my spiritual family tree all the way back to the great patriarch Abraham. You worked to bless the world through him and his descendants. Since I'm one of those descendants, please bless the world through me. Amen.*

Friday, October 2 – Read Philippians 3:5-7. Paul loved the members of the church he planted in the city of Philippi (see map). But there, too, other teachers followed him, selling the "gospel" of salvation by obeying ancient rituals. In answer, Paul wrote if we could save ourselves by religious performance, he'd be glad to put his record up against anyone. But those religious "assets" no longer mattered. He "wrote them off," and trusted in Christ's grace.

- ▲ Paul used an accounting metaphor. He listed all the spiritual "assets" the false teachers wanted the Philippian Christians to accumulate, and said he already owned every one of them. But he didn't see them as "pluses" at all, not when compared to Jesus, his Savior and Lord. What human status symbols or accomplishments do you take the most pride in? How easy or hard is it for you to "write them off," and to find your ultimate identity and confidence in your status as a child of God?
- ▲ Methodist scholar Maxie Dunnam wrote, "It is not the external things that count, but what has happened and is happening inside... Paul chose not to boast except about what Christ had done for him." What has Christ done for you? In what ways has that reshaped your external behaviors, not so much by your own teeth-gritting effort, but as a change coming "from the inside out"?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I want to join Paul in focusing all of my love, all of my confidence, all of my faith on you. Be the eternal "asset" in whom all my trust resides. Amen.*

Saturday, October 3 – Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17. In what was probably one of his last letters, Paul recalled his days as a persecutor and described himself as "the biggest sinner of all." But he did so, not with self-loathing or despair, but simply as a way of bearing witness to the amazing difference God's mercy had (Message Notes and Meditation Moments for September 26-27, 2020 – For more, go to www.summitdurango.org)

made in his life. “Our Lord’s favor poured all over me along with the faithfulness and love that are in Christ Jesus” (verse 14).

- ▲ Paul never forgot who it was who had called him to his ministry: “He [Christ Jesus our Lord] appointed me to ministry even though I used to speak against him, attack his people, and I was proud.” Do only a few people, who have dramatic experiences like Paul’s on the road to Damascus, receive a divine appointment to ministry? Paul didn’t think so. He told the Philippians that they were all his “partners in the ministry of the gospel” (Philippians 1:5), and urged the Romans to render their “appropriate priestly service” to God by using the gifts God had put in each of their lives. In what ways has God appointed you to ministry? How are you responding to that appointment?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, I may not be “the biggest sinner of all,” but I’ve done plenty of things that disappointed you and hurt others. Thank you for showing me mercy, and calling me into your service. Amen.*

Reflection: After learning about Paul, enneagram type Ones, and praying the Thomas Merton prayer (which is pretty timely):

- ▲ What have you noticed about yourself this past week?
- ▲ Where did you see God this past week?
- ▲ How have you grown in your faith (trust) of God’s leading and direction during uncertain times?