

Evergreen Baptist Church Men's Ministry

Study Guide for Chapter 9 in *Paul: Living for the Call of Christ* “Forgetting What Is Behind and Pressing On”

For Tuesday, March 3, 2009, and Saturday, March 7, 2009

If you have the study book, read Chapter 9 (pages 140-158) and review the study questions on pages 158-160. The following questions are designed to help you prepare for the Men's Meeting, even if you do not have the book.

1. Sometimes it is a devastating blow to learn that one of our heroes – especially a spiritual hero – has “feet of clay.” Many men have been severely disillusioned when they have discovered that a man they have looked up to has a serious flaw in his life or character. Why would this be such a challenge for men to face? Yet, such a revelation should not really come as a great surprise. Why? Have you ever had a time when someone you greatly respected showed himself to be less than perfect? How did it affect you? What lessons did you gain from the experience?

2. Acts 15:36-41 records one of the most shocking incidents in the ministry of the Apostle Paul. What does he suggest doing? Why would he want to do that? How did his friend and ministry partner, Barnabas, respond? Yet what causes these two heroes of the faith, men who had just been described by the church in Jerusalem as “beloved... men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 15:25-26), to be torn apart? What does this incident teach you about the Apostle of Grace? How might this heated separation (the Greek word for contention is the source of the English word paroxysm – a sudden, violent, emotional outburst) of these two missionaries actually prove the truth of Psalm 76:10a?

3. Who was right, Barnabas or Paul? Or perhaps it was neither one, or both? This question has been hotly debated for a long time. According to Acts 15:40, which Apostle does it seem the church in Antioch felt deserved their blessing? Which of the two antagonists would you probably be most likely to support, and why? What do we as men trying to serve God in the 21st Century need to learn from this contentious argument between two of His servants in the 1st Century?

4. Paul heads off down the road towards Tarsus, while Barnabas and John Mark set sail to Cyprus. Although Scripture does not give us every detail about what happened to the three men involved in the following years, there are some clear indications of what became of their relationships. Read Colossians 4:10-11; Philemon 1:23-24; and 2nd Timothy 4:9-13. (Also see 1st Peter 5:13.) Then consider 1st Corinthians 9:6. From these passages, what can you conclude about these men? What can we learn from the events that seem to have transpired between these three men in the years after their sad separation in Antioch?

5. Who did Paul choose to become his new partner in the ministry? Who is this man and how had Paul gotten to know him? (See Acts 15:22, 27, 32-35.) Why do you think it was important for Paul to have a co-worker on the journey? How might Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 relate to his decision? What can we learn from Paul's example in this area?

6. The first stops on the journey were in the provinces of Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:41), and then on into Galatia (Acts 16:1). What had happened to Paul during his earlier preaching tours in these same areas? (See Galatians 1:21 with 2nd Corinthians 11:23-27; and also 2nd Timothy 3:10-11 with Acts 14:19-20.) What seems to be his reception this time? Although Dr. Getz makes quite a point of the fact that only the singular pronouns "he" and "him" are used in Acts 15:41-16:3, do you think that this necessarily means that Silas was not with the Apostle at these times? Why or why not?

7. While in Derbe, Paul adds a new member to his team. Who is it and what reputation does he already have? (See Acts 16:1-3.) What do we know of his family background? (See also 2nd Timothy 1:5 and 3:15.) Why do you think that Paul wanted to have the young man accompany him? Although Paul is in the process of delivering the letter from the council in Jerusalem (Acts 16:4-5) which says that circumcision is not necessary, what does he do with this new co-worker? Since Paul had already written to the Galatian churches that his associate Titus was not compelled to be circumcised (Galatians 2:3), was he acting in an inconsistent and hypocritical manner now? Why or why not?

8. As Paul and his party set off into unevangelized areas beyond Galatia, what happens? (See Acts 16:6-10.) How do the principles from these verses relate to what Paul was experiencing

during this time? Genesis 24:26; Psalm 37:23; Proverbs 3:5-6; 16:9; and Jeremiah 10:23. What do you need to apply to your life from these passages and Paul's search for God's will?

9. The challenges that and blessings that Paul encountered as he carried the Gospel into Europe are recounted for us in Acts 16:11-18:17. What are some of the key places that Paul ministered? What city became his main focus of ministry on this trip? What sorts of reactions did he encounter as he traveled? What are some of the various methods that Paul used to preach the Good News? As you read that passage what did you notice about the growth and development of the ministries of Silas and Timothy? What lessons can you gain from this preaching tour that will help you become a more effective servant of the Lord?

10. The return trip to Antioch is covered briefly in Acts 18:18-23. Why is Paul in such a hurry to get to Jerusalem? What does he do in Cenchrea? (See Numbers 6:1-21 for a possible explanation of what Paul was doing.) What do these activities tell you about the Apostle Paul? How might his actions relate to what he would later write in 1st Corinthians 9:19-23?

11. Based on what you know from the rest of the New Testament, how would you describe the relationship between Paul and Timothy? What patterns or principles for your life and ministry can you draw from their examples? What are you doing to actively emulate their example?

12. Dr. Getz brings the chapter to a close with three principles that are designed to help us become the men of character that God wants us to be. After each one, describe ways that you have seen it to be true in your experience. As you read the Scriptures that go with each principle, what further insight do they give you about these principles?

1. "No matter what our status and position as Christians, we need to become more and more like Jesus Christ, not only in what we believe doctrinally, but in the way we live out what we believe in our relationship with others." (See Philippians 3:12-15a; Romans 8:29; 2nd Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:8-10; and 2nd Peter 1:2-4.)
2. "No matter what our design or our gender, we must allow God's Spirit to conform us into the image of Jesus Christ." (See Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 8:1-11; 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:17-32; Titus 3:5; and 2nd Corinthians 5:17.)

3. “No matter what our failures, either as Christians or non-Christians, God wants to give us a second chance.” (See 1st John 1:9; Romans 8:28; Psalm 51:10, 12; 103:3; 130:4; Ephesians 1:7; and Micah 7:18-19.)

13. In several places in this chapter Dr. Getz talks about understanding our God-given design. That includes knowing if you are naturally more inclined to be task-driven or more relational. Are you more moved by intellectual arguments or emotional appeals? Are you sensitive to people's situations or more concerned about following the rules? Do you need things to be cut and dried, or do you want to see the big picture? Why is it valuable to evaluate yourself in these areas? Why is it necessary to understand that other men may not think or react in the same way that you do? Why did God design us to operate in so many different ways? Why does God so often seem to put men with very different designs together – like Paul and Barnabas?

14. Have you been able to forgive those that you have seen fail? Why is that often hard to do? Why is it critically important for us to do that? When you have found failings in your own life, have you been able to forgive yourself and to move on? Why is that often hard to do? Why is it critically important for us to do that? How did Paul model both of these areas of forgiving and forgetting in this lesson? How will his example help you to become more Godly in your life?

15. The memory verse for the chapter is Philippians 3:13-14: “¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” What do you learn about the heart and character of the Apostle Paul from this passage? What are the types of things you need to forget in order to press on towards God's call in your life? How are you going to work towards achieving that in your life so that you can be the man of character that God wants you to be?

16. What are the specific things that you want your brothers to pray with you about this week?