

THE STORY

READ THE STORY. EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE.

AS YOU READ CHAPTER 30

Journal your answers to these questions as you read through the chapter this week. You may wish to read one day and journal the next, or spread the questions over the whole week.

1. Review Paul's personal testimony that he gave to the Jews from the steps of the barracks (Acts 21:37-22:21, p. 442-443). What's your story of God getting a hold of you? How do you feel sharing your story with others? What difficulties do you have sharing? What would help you to be more bold?
2. When Paul begins to speak to the Jews, they suddenly become quiet and listen intently. But then they soon fly into an outrage. Why do they listen? What makes them so upset?
3. Review Ephesians 2:1-10 (p. 453). Make a before and after list of those things that are true of all people before salvation and after salvation. Name at least three outwardly observable ways that you can apply these truths to your life because you are in Christ. "Now that I am in Christ, I am no longer _____."
4. Review Ephesians 5:21-33 (p. 455). What does Paul teach us about the relationship between Jesus and the church? Why is the image of a husband and his bride helpful to imagine Christ and the church? By Christ's example, how does Paul challenge human notions of power and authority in relationships (see also Mark 9:35)?
5. Look up Romans 5:3-5 (p. 433-434) and 2 Timothy 3:10-17 (p. 457). What has Paul's life taught you about perseverance? What might perseverance look like for you today? When have you received God's strength to persevere? Where do you still need it? What gives you courage and patience to keep going forward?
6. Much like in the story of Queen Ester, God is mightily at work behind the scenes in the details of Paul's journey. What evidence of God's grace and sovereignty can you find in Paul's arrests, trials and travels? What does that mean for you in your own journey of faith and life?

PRAYER

Lord,
 You grow your Kingdom one relationship at a time. Thank you that Paul's connections to the churches he established continued in words of support, encouragement and challenge through his letters. God, help me to establish healthy relationships with individuals who can spiritually "parent" me and those whom I can support in their faith. Help me to build purposeful relationships that further your Kingdom work here on earth, just as Paul did. Amen.