

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

## Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 10.31.2021

### A GOD STORY: ACTS 26

#### Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

**Nothing brings more happiness than sharing your own testimony! Everyone of us can tell our own God story and you don't have to be an expert in theology to do so. Our God story, or our testimony, is simply telling others about what you have experienced, seen, and heard. As we study the Book of Acts, we continue to see Paul using his testimony to witness to others. The accounts of his conversion are identified three times in the Book of Acts. In the ninth Chapter of Acts a historical account of Paul's testimony is provided. Then we have his Hebrew account of his conversion given in chapter 22. This is when he was standing upon the temple steps at Jerusalem and explaining to his Jewish brethren why he was now a Christian. Here in the twenty-sixth chapter, we have another account of his conversion as he testified to King Agrippa, king of the Jews, and the Roman Governor Festus. Paul presented the story of his great experience in a way that ought to have appealed to the Gentile Governor as well as to King Agrippa. This should impress upon us the value of testimony to the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's get into our study.**

1. Next to personally knowing Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, one of the greatest joys in life is leading others to Christ and watching them grow spiritually. Share a time when you may have led someone to Christ.
2. Why is the power of your personal story one of the most effective tools in your evangelistic toolbox?
3. What stood out to you during this week's study?

#### Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

#### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 26:1-23**

There are five rulers named "Herod" mentioned in the New Testament. Herod the Great ruled Palestine at the birth of Christ. He ordered the killing of male babies in Bethlehem and built the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Herod Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, was the Herod from whom Mary, Joseph, and their child withdrew to Galilee to avoid presence in Judea (Matt. 2:21-23). Herod Antipas ordered the death of John the Baptist (Mark 6:17-28). Herod Agrippa I imprisoned Peter and killed James, the brother of John. Then there was King Agrippa II, who was the ruler before whom Paul made his defense. Standing before the fifth Herod, Paul recognized Agrippa's acquaintance with the Jewish religion. Paul felt that King Agrippa would be able to understand, at least in measure, something of what he had gone through. He began by saying: "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore, I beg you to hear me patiently" (vv. 2-3). Then he went on to tell of his God story from a young man who strongly believed in Judaism to the pivoting point in his life when he became a believer in Jesus Christ.

1. Why do you suppose the gospel is often at the mercy of people like the five rulers named Herod? Do you see this in our world today?
2. Read Acts 1:8. Paul had much to fear; however, he testified with courage and boldness. Are you ever fearful when testifying? How do you suppose Paul overcame any fear?

### **Visitation/Restoration in 2021**

3. Why do you think Paul so often talked about his conversion in his defenses? Why do you think this a good evangelistic technique to use?
4. Paul says, "I think myself happy" to testify. Why was Paul happy to testify? (Acts 26:2-3). Why should we also be happy to testify of what Jesus has done in our lives?
5. If you had a chance to proclaim your faith to a high official, what would you say? Would you say anything about your past and how Christ changed you? If so, what?

#### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 26:24-32**

Suddenly, and with surprise, Agrippa was "almost" convinced of becoming a Christian. With all the evidence, all of Paul's testimony, all the truth laid out before him, "almost" was as far as Agrippa would go. Like so many people, he had no real case against Christianity, only a reluctance to admit Christ as King.

6. King Agrippa had all the truth laid out before him. Why do you think King Agrippa was reluctant to follow through with accepting Christ as King?
7. A changed mind is beautiful. What do you think is the difference between being sorry and repenting?
8. We are the Paul's of this generation. How does Paul set an example for you as a Christian?

#### **Applying God's Word**

**What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.**

#### **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 61:1-3 (NIV), JOB 19:25-26, and ACTS 26:16-18**

At the time Paul testified before King Agrippa, he had been in prison for two years. The world today is approaching two years under the bondage of COVID and some very trying times. Many have lost their comforts and are in desperate need of a Savior. This is our opportunity, to proclaim the acceptable year of our Savior. To proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to those who are bound. To heal the broken hearted and preach the good news of Jesus to the sorrowful. Our Redeemer lives and we shall soon see the Lord our God. So, we should rise and stand on our feet. Jesus has appeared to us for this purpose. To make us a minister and a witness both of the things which we have seen and of the things which have yet to be revealed to us. Jesus has delivered us, and He sends us to open the eyes of this world through our testimony. This is in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus.'

1. Meditate on Acts 26:16-18 this week. What difference do these truths make to your life, your actions, and your attitudes?
2. Ask God to show you those to whom you may testify of what Jesus has done for you.

#### **PRAYER**

Thank You Lord for the witness of You found in Paul. An example of how we should testify to others. Thank You for the promised resurrection and judgment. Lord, please forgive us of our sins. We repent of our evil ways. Thank You for loving us. We open the door of our heart, please come in, fill us with Your Holy Spirit. We receive the gift of eternal life through You.

*"For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God" Job 19:25-26*