

THE STORY

READ THE STORY. EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE.

AS YOU READ CHAPTER 29

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. As Paul and his companions traveled from city to city, many received their message that Jesus was the Messiah, but many did not. Trace each stop on the journey. How did those who opposed Paul feel? How did they act? Why? What were they afraid of? How does fear play a role in our own culture's experience of faith? Your faith?
2. What did you learn about the relationship between faith and suffering from Paul's life and the church at Thessalonica (p. 416-419)? How might this help you cope as you endure your own trials and suffering?
3. What differences do you find in Paul's message to the Jews in the synagogue (p. 408) as compared to his message to the Gentiles (p. 411)? Discuss applications we might make today for reaching different groups of people with the same gospel.
4. One of the key teachings Paul carried to each city was how we are "made free by Christ" (John 8:32). However, in places like Corinth, people were living quite "free" already, believing freedom means self-indulgence. How does Paul correct this misunderstanding of freedom by teaching about the body of Christ and love (p. 426-427, 431)? What do you think freedom in Christ means?
5. Paul says to the Galatians, "no one who relies on the law is justified before God" (p. 430) and, "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep step in the Spirit" (p. 431). What is the difference between trying to keep the law on your own power and letting the Spirit work the fruits of the Spirit and love through you?
6. Romans 5:1-2 (p. 433) is among the most powerful summaries of the good news of Jesus (Romans 5:8 isn't bad either!). What does having "peace with God" mean to you? How does it feel? How do you experience it?

PRAYER

Gracious God,

Thank you for providing Paul's life as an example of one who courageously lived out your call. Lord, help me to live faithfully as a witness to your work on earth. God, give me courage when I need it most to be obedient to your call in my life. Help me to live a life that follows you, not the world, in all I do and say, even when it is risky and there is resistance. Amen.