

2.2 IN-CABIN BIBLE STUDY MATERIAL

11:30 A.M. TUESDAY-FRIDAY

Bible Study Preparation

Each year when the students of Falls Creek are asked to identify where they made their most life changing decisions, the students consistently say, “their cabin.” That makes your preparation and presentation even more important for your In-Cabin Bible Study at 11:30 each morning. The cornerstone of Falls Creek for each group is the time they spend in their cabin learning, worshipping, and making life decisions.

Every student attends the morning camp-wide experiences in the tabernacle (9:30 - 10:40 a.m. for middle school, 10:05 - 11:10 a.m. for high school). This 11:30 a.m. daily teaching plan builds on the topics and issues that the students will deal with in the Morning Tabernacle Experience each day. It is essential that some of the adults from your group are present with the students at the morning experiences, to help them review what they have learned that day when you begin the 11:30 a.m. time. We recommend at least one adult be present with your high school students and at least one other adult attend with your middle school students.

Each day during the 11:30 a.m. In-cabin Bible Study, you may use the morning Bible study DVD resource (provided with your Falls Creek camp packet) or you may use the live teaching guide printed below. Both the DVD and the live guide cover the same issues, but they use very different approaches to the teaching. If you use the DVD in your cabin, at least consider using the review and discussion questions for each day printed below.

It is strongly recommended that you develop “family groups” for discussion. These groups would be chosen by you and would keep the same members throughout the week. At least one adult, preferably two, would facilitate each group. The adults in the group would help the students think through the material they have been learning during the teaching times each day. Remember, the family leaders are not “teaching” the materials, they are helping the students think and apply what they have learned. For more ideas on developing family groups for discussion, go to [page 14](#).

This year’s material once again includes an optional Echo Group focus. This section is for echo groups formed in the past couple of years or for new echo groups to use the provided questions to reinforce the Echo Group concept from 2009. These groups will meet apart from designated “family group” time. To review: An Echo group is a group of three or four students who discuss their faith with one another on an ongoing basis. They can use the questions provided to begin doing that or to continue doing that. There is not an adult facilitating the Echo Group, these are students talking about the issues on their own. Yes, we understand that many of the groups will not stay on topic. But, if students are going to learn to talk about spiritual things together, they need to start sometime. Adults can be a resource for the Echo Groups, but should avoid the temptation to take over their conversation or to answer all their questions. Some groups are ongoing, some will start long term while at camp, and some students will just be in the group throughout the week and connect consistently with another group of students back home. Remember, an Echo Group self selects; you cannot select their friends, just help them in their friendships.

11:30 A.M. IN-CABIN BIBLE STUDY TEACHING PLAN

11:30 Review/Process Morning Tabernacle Experience (in large group or in family groups)
11:40 Teach Segment One
11:50 Q & A as a Large Group
11:55 Teach Segment Two
12:05 Family Discussion Groups/Practice Echo Groups
12:25 Optional Closing Wrap-Up/Announcements before Lunch
12:30 Lunch in Cabin

LOOK!

Each day will include a teaching segment designed for a student to teach/share from your group. Consider equipping one (or several) of your students, in advance of camp, to teach a segment each day. If you choose not to have students teach that section, it can be taught as a part of the normal teaching segment.

Simple teaching outlines can be downloaded at www.skopos.org/fc-print.

TUESDAY IN-CABIN BIBLE STUDY

"God is Sufficient for Salvation through Jesus Christ"

Key Thought:

God is the author and finisher of our faith. No matter how hard we try, we cannot earn our salvation or please Him on our own. We need a Savior, and God has provided that Savior in His son Jesus Christ. When we put our faith and trust in Him, we become children of God, joint heirs in the Kingdom with Jesus. We are no longer slaves bound by the law, but we are free to live by the Spirit that dwells within us.

Review Tabernacle:

What did you learn during your time in the tabernacle this morning?

What thought or idea stood out to you the most?

Was anything said that caused your heart to sit up and pay attention? Do you think that God could be saying something to you?

Part I: Paul's Salvation Story

Over the next few days, we are going to take a closer look at the life of Paul, one of the most influential members of the early church and author of much of the New Testament. His past might surprise you; his conversion will amaze you; and his commitment to follow Christ no matter the cost will inspire you. In all things, Paul found God to be more than sufficient to meet his needs, and if you give God the same opportunity to work in your life, you will, too.

Today, we will talk about the day that Paul (or Saul) met Jesus and how that unexpected encounter changed his life forever. We will also talk about what Paul's testimony has to do with you.

Read Acts 7:59-8:3.

1. Paul wanted to know and please God. However, Paul hadn't yet met Jesus and was trying to please God by following a strict and seemingly endless list of rules and regulations set up by the religious rulers of that day. Those rulers had taken the law that God had given their forefathers and twisted and added to it until righteousness seemed impossible. Even so, Paul was doing his best to be a good Jew. Because he didn't know what else to do, he was struggling to earn God's favor and achieve perfection on his own power.

Paul was shaken by the things that followers of Christ were saying because it didn't match his way of thinking or what he had believed and worked so hard for up to that point. Like so many of us do, he resisted and lashed out against that which seemed foreign to him. Ironically, he chose to persecute the early church at least partially to please the same God who had already made a way for him to be saved through Jesus Christ.

If we are truly honest with ourselves we know there is not enough ability in ourselves, no matter how hard we try, to meet the challenges that face us, or not enough to be what we need to be for other people, and certainly not enough to face death and eternity alone. We sense that we are imperfect, flawed, and in need of someone or something to make us whole. The trouble is that many of us don't know how to fill the void in our hearts we instinctively know is there. We don't yet understand that God and God alone is enough to heal us now and forever. Like Paul, we still rely on "the good" we see in ourselves to accomplish what only God can accomplish. Paul never understood his flaws until he was confronted by Christ on the road to Damascus. It was only then he realized how deficient he was, how worthless and insufficient his "good deeds" were.

Like a transformed Paul, we too need to realize we are incapable of saving ourselves, and turn to God, for He is the only one sufficient to accomplish our salvation.

****student testimony opportunity****

Read Acts 9:1-22.

2. God chose and called Paul. If Paul were alive today, he would be the guy that pastors called in to give their testimony because it is so out of the ordinary and in-your-face. However, it's not the way that people are called that makes a testimony remarkable; it's who does the calling. Jesus used a stronger approach with Paul possibly because he was headed with such force in the opposite direction. Still, Jesus called Paul to follow Him just like He called all of the disciples, just like He calls individuals to follow Him today. He stops us in our tracks, introduces Himself in a way that we can understand, and as we yield to His Spirit, He assumes command of our lives.

It's important to note that Jesus chose Paul. Paul most definitely did not choose Jesus. We must be careful of ever entertaining the notion that we have done Jesus some kind of favor by choosing Him or of thinking that we can choose Jesus whenever we get good and ready. It doesn't work like that. If you wait too long to respond to God's call, you might miss your opportunity all together.

Notice in vs. 15 that the Lord had Paul's mission in life all laid out even before Paul had received God's healing, or been "saved." He didn't just call Paul to save Paul from himself; he intended all along for Paul to play a vital role in His plan to redeem a lost world to Himself. The same goes for us. God doesn't save us just so that we can rest assured that we won't go to Hell when we die. He plans for us to join Him in rescuing others who are headed in the wrong direction. Your calling to minister to others and your calling to be saved and follow Christ are one and the same. If you are waiting for another spiritual highpoint or calling experience before you begin serving, you've already received it. So, go ahead and jump in to what God has for you!

3. God saved and changed Paul. When Jesus spoke, Paul listened. He followed Jesus' instructions to the letter, humbled himself, and waited for Jesus to rescue him. We don't know the words that Paul prayed as he waited for Ananias, but we know he prayed. We know that he had sin to confess. That's for sure, but we can also assume that his prayers included some kind of surrender and know that, through prayer, his heart was changed. As soon as his sight was restored, he was baptized, symbolizing a heart reborn in Jesus Christ. Then, without looking back, Paul marched boldly into the midst of people that he knew would either be angry with him or scared of him and preached the gospel that Jesus had given him to preach, the very one that had saved him.

Jesus wants to do for each and every one of us what he did for Paul. If we humble ourselves, confess sin, and ask God to heal us, He will. If our heart is humble and our prayers are sincere, God will change us. The words themselves are not magic. They hold no power. We have no power. Only God has the power to heal our sin condition, and He will only do that if we give ourselves fully to Him. The change that comes after a true salvation experience is the proof that we really do belong to Jesus once and for all (2 Corinthians 5:17).

What's most important to note in Paul's story is that it's really not so much about Paul, but about God. From beginning to end, it was God who orchestrated and brought about every aspect of Paul's salvation and transformation. Paul understood this fact fully. He was very careful never to allow himself to become arrogant in his Christianity or too proud of any spiritual maturity that he gained, continually giving God the credit for anything good in him (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Large Group Q & A:

1. In what ways is Paul's salvation experience like the testimonies that people share today? What does that tell us about God? What does that tell us about the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
2. In what ways is his testimony different? Is it any more miraculous than those that you hear today? Explain or give examples.
3. Why is it so important to remember that Paul's story is really God's story? Why is it important for us to remember that our stories are really God's stories?

Part II: The Truth about Salvation

After Paul's conversion, he wasted no time in spreading the gospel from place to place and people group to people group. He didn't settle in any one place and even chose not to marry so that he could fully devote himself to his gospel ministry without feeling obligated to any person other than Jesus Christ. He did a really good job of helping new churches get organized and then keeping up with them, encouraging them, teaching them, and sometimes correcting them in love.

Paul considered these churches and the believers within them to be his children, his family. When they hurt, he hurt; when they had success, he rejoiced; when they struggled, he spoke frankly to them and encouraged them to be what God intended. When he couldn't be with them physically, Paul would write letters (epistles). Some of Paul's epistles were of a very personal nature to a very specific group of people (like the Corinthians), while some epistles were written to a group of churches from a region (like Galatia). Those letters were circulated from church to church so that everyone could benefit from Paul's words.

The following passages of scripture deal with salvation and are taken from Paul's letters to his loved ones. As we read, remember that God intended for you to hear these words, too. He inspired Paul to write them and then made sure that they were included in the Bible that you now hold. These truths apply to us all:

1. Everyone needs a savior (Romans 3:23, 1 Corinthians 4:4, Romans 6:23).
2. Jesus is that savior (John 3:16, Romans 8:1-4).
3. Our salvation is by grace through faith, not works (Ephesians 2:9).
4. Salvation brings freedom from sin (Romans 6:6-7).
5. Salvation brings change (2 Corinthians 5:17).
6. Once you are saved, you are always saved (Romans 10:9-11).
7. Once you are saved, it becomes your mission to tell others how to be saved (Romans 10:13-15, 2 Corinthians 5:15).

Family Group:

1. When did you first become aware of your desire to please God or to be good enough? How did you attempt to go about it?
2. When did the Holy Spirit first speak to your heart about salvation? How did you respond?
3. Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? If so, describe the moment when you gave your heart and life to Him. If not, would you like to know how to begin that relationship? (This is the whole point of this lesson. If a student expresses an interest, stop immediately and put them with someone that can lead them to Christ, preferably a student that they know and trust.)
4. What change has come about in your life as a result of your surrendering your life to Jesus?
5. What are you doing to make sure that the people around you know the Good News of Jesus Christ?
6. Do you know anyone personally who needs to accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior? What role do you think God wants you to play in their salvation story?
7. How can we pray for you? (Spend time praying for each family group member in whatever way works best for your group.)

Optional Echo group questions:

1. How many times have we shared our stories of salvation with the lost in the past year? Is that good enough? How can we improve or stay on track evangelistically?
2. Are we investing in the lives of younger believers the way that Paul invested in the early churches, or are we content only to be known and respected by them?
3. If asked, could we explain why being good can't get a person to Heaven?

WEDNESDAY IN-CABIN BIBLE STUDY

"God is Sufficient for Stability"

Key Thought:

When we seek to live out our calling as followers of Christ, it is certain that we will face difficulties sooner or later. Those difficulties do not mean that God has forgotten or turned his back on us or that we have been unsuccessful in our mission. God works in spite of and through those difficulties to bring about His purposes in the lives of others. If we are obedient in the midst of the challenges that come our way, God will grow us spiritually and give us a testimony that will encourage and uplift others who go through similar challenges.

Review Tabernacle:

What did you learn during your time in the tabernacle this morning?

What thought or idea stood out to you the most?

What do you think God is saying to you?

Part I: Paul's First Missionary Journey

As we discussed briefly yesterday, Paul didn't waste any time after his conversion experience before sharing his testimony with others. The Jews didn't take it so well, though, and his friends had to help him escape (Acts 9). Paul took that opportunity to go away for a time to let God work on his heart and teach him what he needed to know before embarking on the specific missionary journeys that God had for him (Galatians 1). Remember that he had spent his life persecuting Christians, and suddenly he was one. There is no doubt that his mind needed a lot of "renewing" (Romans 12:2).

After three years away, Paul returned to Jerusalem, pumped up and ready for whatever God had in store for him. When he arrived, the disciples didn't exactly roll out the welcome mat, and their response was just the first of many events that would have caused other, less determined and committed followers of Christ to quit. However, Paul had spent serious one-on-one, alone time with Jesus. He knew his Christ; he loved Him; and he was resolved to follow Him, no matter the cost.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 and Romans 1:16.

Every decision that Paul made, he made with one goal in mind, to fulfill God's purpose for his life as stated in this letter to Corinth. He wasn't perfect (Romans 7:15-25), but He was committed and kept on keeping on through every trial and temptation that came his way. Paul knew that God was sufficient for stability in his life and let God guide his steps.

Here are just a few things that Paul experienced right after returning to Jerusalem from his time alone with Jesus and during his very first missionary journey. As you read, imagine how it would feel to go through these things so early in your ministry and consider how you might respond.

1. As we mentioned, Paul was not immediately accepted by the disciples when he arrived in Jerusalem ready to help them. (Acts 9:26)
2. In Paphos, just when Paul got an audience with the proconsul of that region, Sergius Paulus, the proconsul's men distracted their boss and disagreed with what Paul said so that their boss had a hard time listening (Acts 13:6-8).
3. In Pisidian Antioch, the Jews tolerated Paul and his friends and even pretended to encourage them in their mission until the entire town turned out to hear them, Gentiles, too. Then they got bent out of shape over what Paul had to say and kicked them out of the whole region, not just the city (Acts 13:42-50).
4. In Iconium, both Jews and Gentiles believed in his gospel message, but then a group of people made up of both Jews and Gentiles plotted to both "mistreat them and stone them" (Acts 14:1-5).
5. In Lystra, the same people who were after him in Antioch and Iconium chased him down, turned the people against him and his buddies, and stoned him...just him! They left Barnabas and the other guys alone (Acts 14:19-20).

All along the way, it seemed that just when things were going the way we might think they should on a missionary journey over which God has complete control; things went sour for Paul and his friends, but mostly for Paul. It was enough to make most people give up, but Paul didn't. He knew his mission and didn't give up, leaving the results up to God and trusting God to use even the negative to further His kingdom, which He did. We will take a closer look at that on Friday. Actually, if you look at his missionary journey as a whole, it picked up momentum along the way. Paul and his friends caused quite a stir, and many, many people came to know Christ.

Large Group Q & A:

1. If you were Paul, would you have given up at any point on the first missionary journey? When?
2. Have you ever encountered a roadblock or human opposition when trying to do something that God called you to do? How did you handle that situation?
3. Do you ever have trouble trusting God with the outcome in situations like that? If so, how do you overcome that?

Part II: Paul, Speaking from Experience

The very day after the mob stoned Paul and left him for death; he got up and headed for Derbe with his friends. Lots of people got saved there. Most of us would've headed home, happy to end the whole crazy trip on a good note, but Paul didn't. He went right back into the towns where he had experienced persecution to make sure that the Christians there were okay.

Read Acts 14:21-23.

Imagine what the believers in these cities must have been thinking and feeling after what happened to Paul. They knew that the people around them were not exactly excited about their new found faith. They had to know that any one of them could be persecuted in a similar way if they dared to live out their faith. At that point in history, in that part of the world, a Christian's faith was costly, so much more so than most of us experience now.

Imagine how encouraging it must have been to see Paul in person and to hear the words that he was able to speak from experience. Had Paul not gone through what he went through, his words would have been just that, words. He would not have been able to speak with any kind of authority or give the new believers any kind of real encouragement or hope.

The following passages of scripture, once again, are taken from Paul's letters. As we read, remember that Paul is speaking from experience. He knows what he's talking about, and his words should be taken to heart by all Christians.

1. As a believer, you can expect to face difficulty when you live out your calling. That difficulty is an opportunity to glorify God and point to His sufficiency in your life (2 Timothy 3:10-12).
2. You may not choose the difficulties that come into your life, but you can choose your response to those difficulties. As a believer, it is your responsibility to make sure that your response points others to God (2 Corinthians 6:1-10, 2 Corinthians 6:17-7:1, Philippians 1:27-30).
3. When faced with the temptation to do things your own way or to turn back from doing what God has told you to do, you must learn to take charge of your thoughts and resist that temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Corinthians 10:5). Here are some things to remember when you face difficulties that will help you "stay the course":
 - Your battle is not against flesh and blood (Ephesians 6:10-12).
 - God can use all things for your good and His glory (Romans 8:28-29).
 - God will give you the strength to resist any temptation that comes your way (1 Corinthians 10:13).
 - God will provide all your needs (Philippians 4:19).

*****student testimony opportunity*****

Family Group:

1. Is your personal relationship with Jesus strong enough to carry you through difficulties? Is it strong enough for you to help others through their difficulties the way that Paul's friends stayed by his side?
2. What is your typical response to adversity or difficulty in your life? Is your focus where it needs to be? Explain.
3. Does it seem fair to you that Christians can expect to face challenges when they obey God? Does it help your perspective any to consider what Jesus endured for us?
4. Why is it so hard to remember that our battle is not against flesh and blood? Are you in any battles right now that feel an awful lot like a battle against flesh and blood? How could remembering Ephesians 6:10-12 help you deal with those situations in a Christ-like way?
5. Give an example from your life when God used something that seemed bad for your good and His glory.
6. Tell about a time that God helped you resist temptation or provided for one of your needs.
7. What challenge is God laying on your heart today? How can we pray for you? (Spend time praying for each family group member in whatever way works best for your group.)

Optional Echo group questions:

1. What challenges have we faced in the past year? Are we persevering under trial as God would have us to do?
2. Are we supporting other believers in our home, school, and community the way that God wants us to? Are we encouraging newer believers by sharing what God has done in our lives?
3. Are we relying on God to work through us and provide for our needs, or are we become self-sufficient in the way that we live out our calling?

THURSDAY IN-CABIN BIBLE STUDY

"God is Sufficient for Satisfaction"

Key Thought:

'Joy' discussed in the Bible is as much a matter of choice and focus as it is something miraculous that God provides. As a matter of fact, it is the Truth found in God's Word that fuels that joy. When we focus on God's Truth rather than on our circumstances, we experience deep and abiding joy that the enemy cannot steal from us. However, when we take our eyes off of God's Truth to focus on ourselves or any other distraction that the world offers, we lose our joy and make ourselves vulnerable to discouragement and apathy.

Review Tabernacle:

What did you learn during your time in the tabernacle this morning?

What thought or idea stood out to you the most?

How do you think God is calling you to respond to Him today?

Part I: Choosing Joy

It's one thing to persevere under trial with a keen sense of purpose and calling. It's entirely different to persevere under trial with joy. Such a thing can be difficult to imagine, especially if you haven't been through anything particularly difficult yet or if you confuse the idea of joy with happiness.

Although joy and happiness can often be experienced together, they are fundamentally different. Happiness is a temporary emotion caused and/or affected by external circumstances, while joy is a deep and abiding peace based on truth that affects external circumstances. Happiness is a tide that washes in and washes out, but joy is a strong and steady river that carries and sustains.

First and foremost, a Christian's joy is found in his/her salvation and eternal security in Jesus Christ. In addition, we may also find joy in the promises of our Heavenly Father concerning His love for us and the inheritance that is ours as His children, knowing that He can be trusted. We know that Jesus is sufficient for our satisfaction or contentment in all circumstances; we know that He is sufficient for our joy.

Read Ephesians 1:4-14.

****student testimony opportunity****

To live a life full of joy, a believer must learn to focus on these Truths rather than on his/her circumstances.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

Paul's life wasn't particularly full of happiness, though he did experience that emotion whenever he had the chance to spend time with the church, but he did experience consistent joy in both good and bad circumstances, such as the time that he and Barnabas were chased out of Pisidian Antioch.

Read Acts 13:50-52.

Paul's joy was constant because his focus was constantly on Jesus and God's promises. He was so focused, in fact, that he longed and even pined for Heaven and felt torn between leaving this life and staying so that he could tell others about Jesus and encourage the church.

Read Philippians 1:21-26.

Those of us who have a personal relationship with Jesus experience that same joy when we choose to focus on the same things that Paul did. However, if we let the world distract us and take our eyes off of Jesus—if we "look down," so to speak—our joy will fade, and the enemy will have room in our hearts to discourage us and cause us to doubt. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul talks about that (Galatians 4:15-16). The Galatians had allowed people from the outside, Judaizers, to come in and shake their faith. They had begun to focus on themselves again, trying to earn their salvation instead of relying on and taking joy in what Jesus had done for them. If we are not careful, we can fall into the trap of focusing on self as well, doing works that we consider good instead of letting God lead and trying to prove our worth by our own merit instead of claiming God's grace and mercy.

Paul did not let:

- People steal his joy (Gal. 1:10)
- Predicaments steal his joy (Phil. 4:11)
- Possessions steal his joy (Phil. 4:12)

Large Group Q & A:

1. Do you think that joy or happiness is more important for a Christian who genuinely wants to follow Christ? Explain. What have you been pursuing? What has the result been?
2. Most often, do you look to God, yourself, or the world for joy? What is the result?
3. Do you know any Christians who exhibit real joy in their lives? How do you know?

Part II: Don't Look Down

In this day and age, it's easy for Christians to lose their focus and so lose their joy, just as the Galatians did. Our world is full of distractions, and our enemy is a crafty and active one. Even within the church, the temptation exists to focus on ourselves, and our own abilities and accomplishments instead of remembering that any good in us is only there because of Christ. Many Christians are confused and discouraged when they hear others talk about the joy they have in Christ because they aren't experiencing that joy for themselves. No one has ever taught them how to take hold of it and live in it. They are waiting for it to happen to them like happiness does, but joy doesn't work like that. Living a life of joy in Christ takes practice, but you can do it if you discipline yourself to focus on the unseen and not "look down" on the seen things that surround you.

The first step in living that life of joy in all circumstances, good or bad is to fill your heart and mind with the Truth of God's Word. If you don't know what God has done for you and what He has promised, how are you going to focus on it? The Bible is full of such Truths and promises. We've discussed many of them over the past couple of days about salvation and making consistent, wise choices based on God's will. We discussed others just moments ago, but here are just a few more to help you stay focused on the unseen when you face difficulties and find it a little harder to keep your focus:

1. God has anointed you for His service and will help you to stand strong until we get to Heaven (2 Corinthians 1:21-22, Philippians 1:4-6).
2. When you mess up, God will forgive you if you confess that sin (1 John 1:9).
3. The things that you do in obedience to God are not wasted, even if you don't get to see the results of your labor (1 Corinthians 15:58, Galatians 6:9-10).
4. God can use any suffering or challenges that you go through to encourage others (2 Corinthians 1:3-7, Philippians 1:12-14).
5. No matter what happens here on this earth, nothing can separate you from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35-39).

Family Group:

1. Have you ever experienced the kind of joy that Paul talks about in your own life? If so, what is that like? How does it help? If not, what has been standing in your way, do you think?
2. Does it help you to know the difference between happiness and joy? Have you ever thought of joy as something that you choose based on what you know of God? How will this knowledge affect the way you handle difficulty in your life?
3. Have you ever allowed the enemy to snatch your joy? If so, what tools did he use against you? What was the result? How can you stand strong against him in the future?
4. What scripture that we have discussed this week has stood out to you as being something that you can apply in the future or something that will help you keep your focus?
5. What are some other Truths from scripture that help you focus on the unseen and bring you joy? Share the Truth and the verse so that the rest of the group can be encouraged.
6. How will the people waiting for you back home be affected if you continue or begin to live a life of genuine joy in Christ?
7. What is God saying to your heart? How can we pray for you? (Spend time praying for each family group member in whatever way works best for your group.)

Optional Echo group questions:

1. Are we focused more on the seen or the unseen things? How does that affect our walk and the people around us?
2. Are we choosing to live in the joy of Christ, or are we allowing the enemy to defeat us?
3. Are we actively filling our minds and hearts with Truth that will help us keep our focus?
4. What changes do we need to make as individuals and as a group?



FRIDAY IN-CABIN BIBLE STUDY

"God is Sufficient for Our Service"

Key Thought:

God expects all of His children to obey Him and live out their calling by spreading the Gospel where and how He tells them. As we serve, we are encouraged by the fact that God supplies all of our needs when we obey Him, and we are humbled by the fact that God is the One that brings any results that come from our obedience. Our weaknesses and human limitations give God the opportunity to demonstrate His power in and through us. In this way, even our weaknesses can bring glory to God. Knowing this, we must be patient with one another and take every opportunity to encourage one another.

Review Tabernacle:

What did you learn during your time in the tabernacle this morning?

What thought or idea stood out to you the most?

How do you think God is calling you to respond to Him today?

Part I: God at Work

Paul's determination to live out the calling that God had placed on his life was a testimony in itself of God's ability to work through a person. It defies human logic that any man would go through what Paul went through for something so seemingly intangible and abstract, and he was not the only one to go through that kind of persecution and opposition. Many others did too. Their dogged determination and self-sacrifice in the face of what they experienced gave evidence of a supernatural power at work in very natural human hearts. With their own mouths, those people and many after them freely identified that supernatural power as the Holy Spirit that came to live in their hearts the moment that they placed their faith in Jesus Christ and relied on Him for their salvation. That same Holy Spirit lives in the heart of each and every believer today, enabling us to endure and to do everything that the early Christians did. The thought of offering your body as a living sacrifice in service to God (Romans 12:1-2) can be a little scary at times, and the very idea that the reconciliation of the world to God is something that you are supposed to play a part in (2 Corinthians 5:18) can be overwhelming to think about. But, take heart, your Heavenly Father doesn't expect you to do all of the work. In fact, the only item on your "to do" list is this: OBEY. Leave the rest up to God; He is sufficient for our service.

For example, let's look back at Paul's first missionary journey, the one with all of the obstacles and challenges. Every step of the way, God provided what Paul and his friends needed in order for God's purposes to prevail and brought about the results that He intended all along.

1. When the disciples failed to greet Paul with open arms because they were afraid of him, God sent Barnabas to serve as mediator and bridge the gap (Acts 9:27).
2. In Paphos, when the sorcerer twisted Paul's words and turned the proconsul against him, God gave Paul the words to speak in rebuke and the power to make the man blind so that the proconsul would believe him (Acts 13:9-12).
3. In Pisidian Antioch, God brought the entire town out to listen to Paul speak "and all who were appointed for eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). These people were Gentiles. This is just one of many times that God used Paul to reach the Gentiles just as He has said that He would at the point of Paul's conversion (Acts 9:15). Isn't it interesting that the Bible tells us that God already had in mind who would be saved before Paul even got there? That's just further proof that God has got everything under control, even when it's hard to tell from our perspective.
4. Then, when the people ran Paul and Barnabas out of town, God filled their hearts with joy and with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:51-52).
5. In Iconium, when both Jews and Gentiles stirred up trouble for Paul and Barnabas, God gave them the ability to perform signs and wonders so that the people would believe (Acts 14:3).
6. In Lystra, God gave them the ability to heal a crippled man and spared Paul's friends from being stoned, leaving someone to help Paul when he needed it (Acts 14:8-10, 20).
7. The very day after Paul was stoned, God gave him the strength and healing necessary to be able to leave for Derbe, where they were able to win a large number of disciples (Acts 14:21). You'll notice that this is actually a pattern. You have to wonder what would have come of those people later in Paul's missionary journey if the first towns on the tour had been more receptive. Paul had to move on, and God used the persecution of Paul by others to move him on so that the gospel could be spread, just as he had after Stephen's stoning when Paul was still persecuting the church (Acts 8:1-2).
8. In allowing Paul to go through all of these difficulties, God provided Paul with a testimony that carried weight with those who had believed in his message (Acts 14:21-23).
9. God gave Paul and Barnabas a family in the form of the early church with whom they found rest and encouragement (Acts 14:26-28).

Paul's first missionary journey was very successful, although it might have been hard for him, his friends, and onlookers to see it that way at the time, considering all that they went through. Sure, they knew that lives had been affected, but they had no way of knowing exactly how many put their faith in Christ and never had the chance to see the impact of those conversions on the families, friends, and acquaintances of those new believers, the things that normally encourage us and keep us on track. All they knew was that God would be faithful and bring about the results that He had in mind, and He was. In the end, they didn't pat themselves on the back. They knew that God had brought them through and that it was God that brought about the results, not them (Acts 14:27).

****student testimony opportunity****

Large Group Q & A:

1. If you had traveled with Paul, would you have had a hard time seeing God's hand at work? Explain.
2. Do you ever struggle to see God's hand at work in the challenges that you face? Explain.
3. As brothers and sisters in Christ, how should we encourage each other when we face difficulties and challenges?

Part II: Everything You Need

As most students have been believers for less than a decade, you are a lot like Paul in this stage of his ministry and service to the Lord. He was a relatively new believer on his first missionary journey and was just learning what it meant to live out his calling to spread the Gospel. Granted, Paul probably had a good idea that he would face persecution on his trip (after all, Paul had done the persecuting before he was saved!), while that idea may be a bit foreign to us living here in the United States. However, he hadn't really been on the receiving end before. The people in Damascus had planned to hurt him once, he had escaped unharmed.

Setting out, Paul was full of determination, purpose, and zeal. He had to learn by experience what it meant to share in Christ's sufferings (Romans 8:17-18) in order to rescue the lost. He found it tough at times and rewarding at times, and as he continued on the path that God had laid out for him, Paul grew stronger in his faith and closer to God in all circumstances. In the end, Paul had real and abiding joy and was able to die knowing that he had run a good race (2 Timothy 4:7).

Right now, for most of you, the idea of your actually taking active and purposeful steps to share the Gospel with your family, friends, community, and other places is probably pretty fresh and new, and the thought of facing difficulties or opposition may be a bit intimidating. It would be nice to be able to tell you exactly what would happen and how it would turn out, but no one knows those things but God. Odds are that it will be tough for you at times and rewarding at times, just as it was for Paul; but if you are faithful, you will grow stronger in your faith and closer to God and be able to encourage those believers that follow you.

Following are some of the things that Paul would tell you if he could sit down with you one-on-one. You will learn these things for yourself and confirm them in your heart when you follow and obey God's leading in your own life.

1. God created you with a purpose in mind, and He will bring about that purpose (Romans 8:28-30).
2. God has a job for you to do (Ephesians 2:10).
3. God will provide all that you need when you obey Him.
 - He will provide contentment in every circumstance (Philippians 4:13).
 - He will provide encouragement for endurance (Romans 15:5-6).
 - He will provide competence (2 Corinthians 3:6).
 - He will provide strength (1 Corinthians 1:8-9).
 - He will provide comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).
 - He will provide deliverance in accordance with His will (2 Corinthians 1:8-11).
 - He will provide you with gifts through the Holy Spirit that enable you to carry out your mission (Ephesians 4:7-12).
 - God's strength is made perfect in your weakness, bringing glory to God for your success and not to you and your abilities (2 Corinthians 2:14-15, 2 Corinthians 4:7-11, 2 Corinthians 12:9).

Think about these things and let them encourage you. In many ways, these Truths should take a lot of pressure off of you to "perform" for God. As long as you obey Him, you're good. Something else that you might want to think about in relationship to these Truths is how you interact with others that are seeking to please God like you are. We can be awfully critical of one another sometimes. It's good to remember that God is using people in different ways at different times and that He has a purpose for every success and every struggle that each of us goes through. We cannot possibly know what God is doing in someone else's life or how He will choose to use it to bring about His purposes, so we shouldn't even try to figure it out. Just because someone is struggling doesn't mean he/she has slipped up, and just because someone is experiencing blessing doesn't mean that they have won some kind of prize for being better than someone else. Let's let God be God and be consistent in our encouragement of one another and love each other like God has told us to so that others will know that our God is real and want to be on His team (John 13:35).

Family Group:

1. How does it feel to know that God's plan for you doesn't end with your own salvation? Have you ever taken steps to live out your calling by telling others how they can be saved?
2. Have you ever heard God tell you to do something and then done that thing? Did God allow you to see the results of that obedience, or will you have to wait until Heaven to know how it all turned out?
3. How does it make you feel to know that you are not responsible for the results of your obedience? Explain.
4. Go back through the list of things that God provides for you. Have you experienced any of these for yourself? Do you have trouble trusting God for any of these? Explain.
5. Does it seem possible that God can work through your weaknesses? How might that look in your life? Give specific examples.
6. Do you treat other believers with the same kind of patience and encouragement that you need from them as you try to follow and obey God? Explain. Does anything need to change?
7. What are some of the good works that you think God has prepared in advance for you to do when you go back home? How can we pray for you? (Spend time praying for each family group member in whatever way works best for your group.)

Optional Echo group questions:

1. Have we allowed God to be sufficient for our service, or have we only taken on tasks that we can handle on our own power?
2. Have we put others first by demonstrating patience with our Christian brothers and sisters and encouraging them, or have we been arrogant and/or judgmental in our interaction with them?
3. What does God want from us in the coming year?