



Paul's Final Days

The Story – Chapter 30; Acts 20-23, 27-28; Eph. 1-6; II Tim. 1-4

Personal Study Guide

May 3, 2009

Read the chapter from The Story in one sitting (each chapter is about 12 pages long). Consider doing the reflection questions on three separate days to put space between your learning and allow for better and deeper retention. If three separate reflection times aren't practical, you may choose to read and answer all three days' questions in one extended personal devotional time.

Day One

1. Paul summarized his ministry when he met with the elders from Ephesus (pages 363–364). Make a quick list of all the things he mentions that could be valuable traits or tasks of any leader. Which of those elements do you think God is asking you to have more of in your ministry or leadership role?
2. Paul was able to speak to the crowd after his arrest (pages 365–366). What was the comment that got them so mad they wouldn't let him speak anymore? Given the fact God has always wanted his people to reach out to those far from him, why do you suppose they had come to despise those far from God instead of long for their redemption? How do we sometimes fall into a similar trap?

Day Two

1. Although God wanted his chosen people to accept their chosen Messiah, most first-century Jews who heard about Jesus did not accept him. Consistent with Isaiah's prophecy, Paul proclaimed that the Gentiles—those without a background in the Hebrew Scriptures—would actually be more receptive (page 373). How can we make sure we don't harden our hearts and shut out God's message the way so many of God's chosen people did?
2. What does Paul say is the relationship between grace, faith, and salvation (page 374)? What do you think it means that "God prepared in advance" the good works we will do?

Day Three

1. Why do you think there is such a stress on "oneness" in Paul's writing—and in God's design for our faith and practice (page 375)? Summarize in your own words how that oneness plays out in family relationships (page 376).
2. According to Paul, who "breathed" out the Scriptures (page 378)? Give examples from your own life of the "usefulness" they have with regard to the values he identifies.