

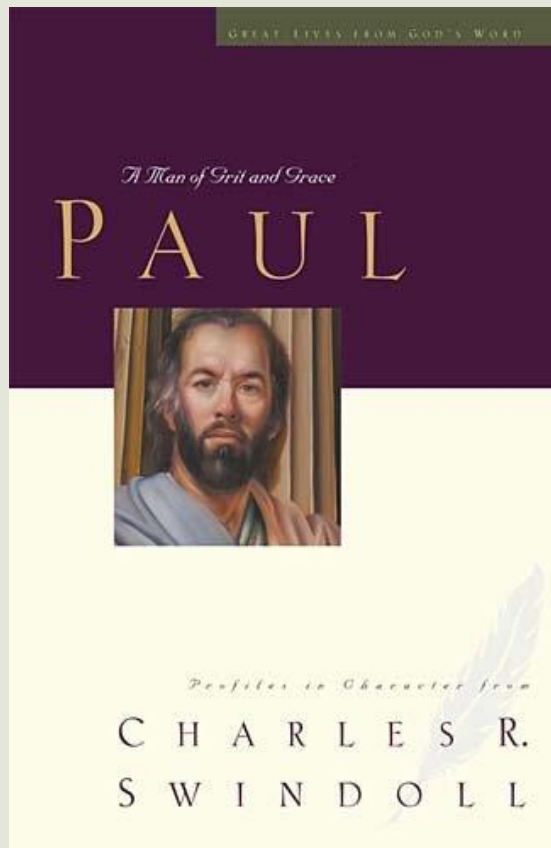
The background is a dark grey chalkboard with various white chalk sketches. On the left, there's a large drawing of a microscope. Above it, a globe of the Earth is sketched. Below the microscope, there are several books stacked together. In the bottom right corner, there are sketches of a percentage sign, an exclamation mark, and a right-pointing arrow. The overall theme is educational and scientific.

# Paul – Session 3

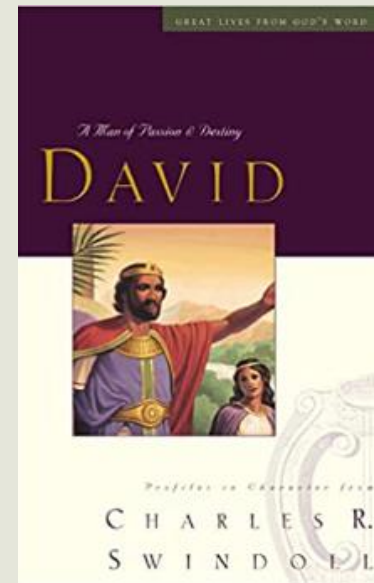
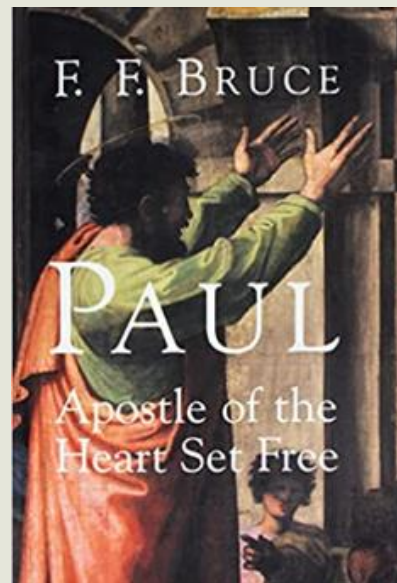
## New Testament Studies

CBC B&B Sunday School  
March 26, 2023

# Source Material



Primary Source



Companion Sources

# Lesson 3 Intro...

- Acts 9 (~ AD 35):
  - Saul was on his way to Damascus to look for / purge followers of Christ
  - Jesus confronted him for his actions, then blinded him for 3 days in Damascus
  - After 3 days, Jesus sent Ananias to restore his sights, and to baptize him (Acts 9:18)

# Acts 9:18-30 [NASB]

<sup>18</sup> Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. <sup>20</sup> At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup> All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?"

# Acts 9:18-30 [NASB]

<sup>22</sup> Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah. <sup>23</sup> After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, <sup>24</sup> but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. <sup>25</sup> But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

<sup>26</sup> When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.

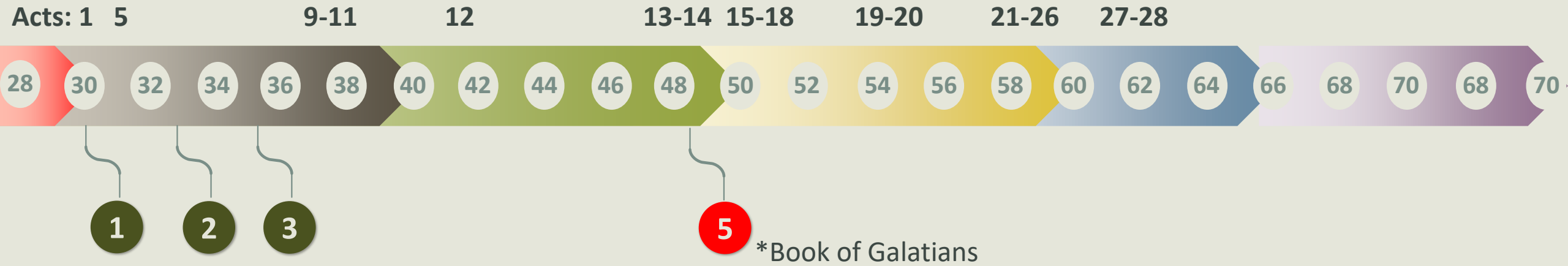
# Acts 9:18-30 [NASB]

<sup>27</sup> But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. <sup>28</sup> So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. <sup>29</sup> He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. <sup>30</sup> When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

# Acts 9:18-30 [NASB]

<sup>18</sup> Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. <sup>20</sup> At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup> All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?"

# Chronology of Acts / Life & Ministry of Paul



- 
- 1 Ascension – Acts 1  
Pentecost – Acts 2  
Apostles before Sanhedrin – Acts 5
  - 2 Stoning of Stephen – Acts 7
  - 3 Paul's Conversion – Acts 9
-



# Galatians 1:10-17 [NASB]

<sup>10</sup> For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ. <sup>11</sup> For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. <sup>12</sup> For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it* through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

<sup>13</sup> For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it;

# Galatians 1:10-17 [NASB]

<sup>14</sup> and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

<sup>15</sup> But when God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased <sup>16</sup> to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, <sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

# Galatians 1:10-17 [NASB]

<sup>14</sup> and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

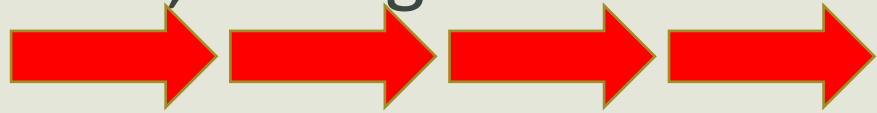
<sup>15</sup> But when God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased <sup>16</sup> to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, <sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; **but I went away to Arabia,** and returned once more to Damascus.

# Acts 9:18-30 [NASB]

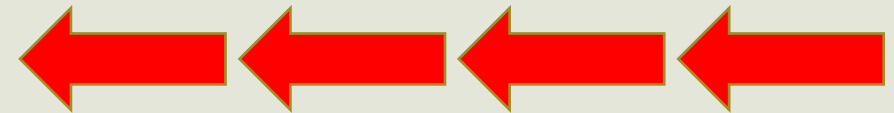
<sup>18</sup> Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength. **Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.** <sup>20</sup> At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup> All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?"

# Acts 9:18-30 [NASB]

<sup>18</sup> Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, <sup>19</sup> and after taking some food, he regained his strength.



**BREAK!**



**Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.** <sup>20</sup> At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. <sup>21</sup> All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?"

# Acts 9:18-30 [NASB]

<sup>22</sup> Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah. <sup>23</sup> After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, <sup>24</sup> but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. <sup>25</sup> But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

<sup>26</sup> **When he came to Jerusalem**, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.

# Galatians 1:10-17 [NASB]

<sup>14</sup> and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

<sup>15</sup> But when God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased <sup>16</sup> to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, <sup>17</sup> nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; **but I went away to Arabia,** and returned once more to Damascus.

# Galatians 1:18-24 [NASB]

<sup>18</sup> Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days. <sup>19</sup> But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. <sup>20</sup> (Now in what I am writing to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying.) <sup>21</sup> Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. <sup>22</sup> I was *still* unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; <sup>23</sup> but only, they kept hearing, "He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy." <sup>24</sup> And they were glorifying God because of me.



# Galatians 1:18-24 [NASB]



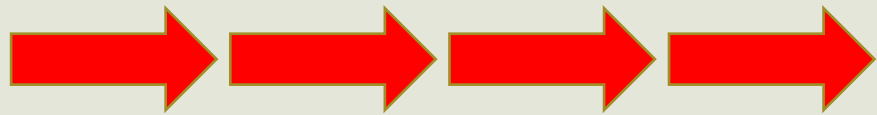
# Acts 9:18-30 [NASB]

<sup>22</sup> Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah. <sup>23</sup> After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, <sup>24</sup> but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. <sup>25</sup> But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

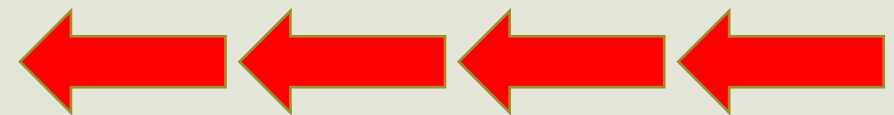
<sup>26</sup> **When he came to Jerusalem**, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.

# Acts 9:18-30 [NASB]

<sup>22</sup> Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah. <sup>23</sup> After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, <sup>24</sup> but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. <sup>25</sup> But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.



**BREAK!**



<sup>26</sup> **When he came to Jerusalem**, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.

# Acts 9:26-30 [NASB]

<sup>26</sup> When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. <sup>27</sup> But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. <sup>28</sup> So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. <sup>29</sup> He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. <sup>30</sup> When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

# Galatians 1:18-24 [NASB]



# Timeline – Acts 9 / Galatians 1

- Paul's Conversion Journey Timeline
  - Encounter with Christ, blinded for three days w/o food or water (Acts 9:3-9)
  - Eyes opened by Ananias, baptized (Acts 9:10-18)
  - Ate some food to gain strength, then went to Arabia (Acts 9:19a, Gal 1:16)
  - Returned to Damascus, met with some disciples, preached (Gal 1:17, Acts 9:19b-25)
  - Went back to Arabia for three years, then came to Jerusalem (Gal 1:18)
  - Met with apostle Peter and James in Jerusalem (Gal 1:18-19; Acts 9:27)
  - Past life as a Pharisee continues to haunt him (Acts 9:29-30; Gal 1:22-23)
  - Retreats to Tarsus (Acts 9:30)

# Galatians 1:10-24

- Paul's Perspective – Before Encountering Christ:
  - Seeks favor of men; strives to please men (Gal 1:10)
- Paul's Perspective – After Encountering Christ:
  - No longer trying to please men (Gal 1:10)
  - Did not consult “flesh and blood” (i.e.. People) to learn about Christ (Gal 1:16)
  - Theology came from Christ alone (Gal 1:12; 16b)
  - Did not seek attention to be with / by being with the apostles (Gal 1:17-19)
  - Acknowledged his calling to preach to the Gentiles (Gal 1:16)
  - Three years in solitude in the dessert of Arabia (Gal 1:17)
  - Only met the apostles after three years of solitude (Gal 1:18)
  - Four-Five years in solitude in Tarsus (Acts 9:30)

# Galatians 1:10-17 [NASB]

Necessity of Solitude, Quietness, and  
Obscurity



# Swindoll's Observation on Biblical Sabbaticals

Godly leaders prepared by God using periods of solitude, quietness, and obscurity:

- Moses –
  - Bright future as political leader in Pharaoh's kingdom
  - Led away to spend 40 years in the desert in obscurity – in order to lead God's people to survive 40 years in the desert later.
- David –
  - Anointed king over Israel as a teen
  - After defeating Goliath, spent the next 13 years as a fugitive

# Swindoll's Observation on Biblical Sabbaticals

Godly leaders prepared by God using periods of solitude, quietness, and obscurity:

- Joseph –
  - Held favorable position with Potiphar
  - Spent 2 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit
- Elijah –
  - Defeated an army of Baal prophets
  - Spent the next 40 days hiding in the cave

# Swindoll's Observation on Biblical Sabbaticals

Godly leaders prepared by God using periods of solitude, quietness, and obscurity:

- Summary:

- Sustained period of solitude fueled the preparation for future effectiveness of God's servants

“Our (Godly leaders) problem is that we are blinded in our perspective. We see ourselves as resourceful, talented, articulate, responsible, and efficient. So why pause? Why take a break? We have important matters to attend to ...

... Everything is fine until the well runs dry...”

# Swindoll's Principles

- Key Qualities of Godly Leaders

- 1 – spirituality: God seeks out “..a man after His own heart..” This means that whatever bothers God should bother His leaders; Spirituality means to be deeply authentic in your walk with God; not faking it for people to see
- 2 – humility: God seeks out “..a servant’s heart..”, not looking for his own glory, but serves to make the master (God) look good.
- 3 – Integrity: God seeks out someone who acts from the heart, and not based on outward appearance; someone who would do the right thing, and not the popular thing.

# Swindoll's Principles

- How God Raises / Trains His Leaders
  - 1 – Solitude: David was trained – alone with God – in life's major lessons in the valleys of God's creation before God thrust him into the public eye
  - 2 – Obscurity: David was hidden from attention despite all of his achievements. Those who first accept the silence of obscurity are best qualified to handle the applause of popularity.

# Swindoll's Principles

- How God Raises / Trains His Leaders
  - 3 – Monotony: David was tasked with menial, routine, and seemingly insignificant responsibility of tending the sheep daily. Embracing these constant, unchanging endless hours of monotonous tasks helped developed skills in David that God will use in the future.
  - 4 – Reality: David's training ground is in the valley and wilderness with real world dangers and struggles (alone!) to help develop his courage and trust (i.e.. to face Goliath).

# Swindoll's Principles Chapter 4

## Benefits of Solitude and Silence in a busy life

- Instead of speeding up, slow down and rethink
- Instead of talking more, be quiet and reflect
- Instead of seeking a place of power, be still and release

# Applications

- When your life is too busy...
  - Embrace the “theology” of solitude
  - Embrace the “theology” of obscurity
- If your image needs repairing...
  - Embrace the “theology” of solitude
  - Embrace the “theology” of obscurity



# Questions