



11

Saul Is Converted

Key Theme

- Jesus will build His church.

Key Passages

- Acts 9:1–9, 9:13–15; 1 Corinthians 15:9–10; 2 Corinthians 11:24–27, 5:17

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe how Saul was converted.
- Contrast Saul/Paul before and after his conversion.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will practice the memory verse by completing the Memory Verse Review Sheet and reciting the verse to a friend.



Activity 1: Saul Is Converted Class Notes

Students will fill out the Saul Is Converted Class Notes as you study the lesson.



Studying God's Word

Jesus appeared to Saul in a bright light. When confronted with the truth of who Jesus is, Saul became a believer. His life changed from a persecutor of Christians to a preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and he endured many trials for preaching the truth.



Activity 2: Truth Be Told Review Game

Students will review the lesson by playing the Truth Be Told Review Game.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- ☐ Print the Memory Verse Review Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.

- ☐ Memory Verse Poster
- ☐ Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student



SAUL IS CONVERTED CLASS NOTES

- ☐ Print one Saul Is Converted Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- ☐ Saul Is Converted Class Notes for each student
- ☐ Saul Is Converted Answer Key
- ☐ Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- ☐ Print and cut the Saul Is Converted Mini-Posters from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- ☐ Study the Prepare to Share section.
- ☐ Go Before the Throne.

- ☐ Saul Is Converted Mini-Posters
- ☐ Poster putty
- ☐ Student Take Home Sheets



TRUTH BE TOLD REVIEW GAME

- ☐ Assemble the Truth Be Told Game Board Posters found in your curriculum kit.
- ☐ Print the Truth Be Told Game Components from the Resource DVD-ROM. Keep the Truth Be Told Question Answer Key for your use.
- ☐ Cut apart the Truth Be Told Number Cards. These will determine how many spaces to move. OR bring in dice or a game spinner to be used to move teams around the board.
- ☐ Cut apart the Truth Be Told Question Cards.
- ☐ Bring buttons or other small items to use as game pieces for each team and poster putty for adhering game pieces to the game board.

- ☐ Truth Be Told Game Board
- ☐ Truth Be Told Number Cards OR use dice or a game spinner
- ☐ Truth Be Told Question Cards
- ☐ Truth Be Told Question Answer Key
- ☐ Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team
- ☐ Poster putty



Memory Verse

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.



10:30



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages listed above with this background.

All believers who heed the words of Jesus Christ to repent and believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15) become new creations in Christ Jesus—the old is gone and the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17). Believers are born again to a living hope through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3). How this happens in the hearts of each individual is a work of God. Each transformation is dramatic in that God seals the soul of the believer for eternity (Ephesians 1:13–14).

However, some circumstances that surround the conversion of each believer may not seem as dramatic as others. God redeems some at a very young age from a Christian family, others attend church all their lives, trying to live lives honoring to God, and then one day they understand the truth of the gospel as they repent and turn to Christ as Savior. Still others live lives of darkness, sin, and rebellion—and God reveals His truth to them suddenly and unexpectedly, bringing them out of the darkness and into the light (John 8:12).

But there have been few conversion experiences that would top that of the Jew, Saul of Tarsus, who boasted of his confidence in his life and background. He had been circumcised according to Jewish law. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews, a descendant of Benjamin, of the house of Abraham—a true son of Israel. As a Pharisee, he was zealous for the Jewish law and openly and passionately persecuted the church—those who proclaimed Jesus as Lord (Philippians 3:4–6).

And yet, he was dramatically transformed into a new creation in Christ and then used by God to start numerous churches and write much of the New Testament. How did the Lord Jesus Christ get this murderous Pharisee's attention? It happened on the road to Damascus where Saul fully intended to find men and women of the Way (followers of Jesus) and bring them bound to Jerusalem for persecution and trial (Acts 9:1–2).

Jesus literally knocked Saul to the ground as he journeyed. He saw a bright light and heard a voice speaking to him, the Lord Jesus Himself, asking, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:3–4). Saul was astonished and afraid—to the point of asking what the Lord would have him do. The Lord had something for him—and it would start in the city of Damascus, the very city he was headed to in order to further destroy the church and the people of Christ. But the Lord's plan was far different than Saul's plan. Saul had been struck down and humbled and was afraid. The Lord had made

him blind, and Saul was helplessly led by the hand into the city (Acts 9:8).

The zealous Pharisee, Saul, had met the risen Christ who called him into ministry in a spectacular way. The Lord declared that Saul (who was also known as Paul) was His chosen vessel, and he would bear the name of Christ to the Gentiles, to kings, and to the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). Jesus had plans for Saul, and Saul's heart was dramatically changed so that "immediately he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He [Jesus] is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20)!

Saul was a new creation in Christ. This Hebrew of Hebrews who had persecuted the Way by binding and then delivering both men and women to prison (Acts 22:4); this Saul who had held the clothes of the murderers as they dragged the very first martyr for Christ, Stephen, out of the city and stoned him because of his faith and love for Jesus (Acts 7:57–59); this man now suffered for His Lord through beatings, stonings, shipwrecks, peril, robbers, weariness, toil, sleeplessness, hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, and many other things (2 Corinthians 11:25–27). The Lord Jesus Christ had made Paul a new creation. And after meeting the living Jesus, he would no longer boast except in the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:14).

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

If anyone deserves to be punished and to pay for his sins, it would be a person who has persecuted believers, hunted them down, imprisoned them, assisted with their murder, and blasphemed the name of God. Right? That may be how we think sometimes, but the truth is that all of us have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). All sin is an affront to a holy God, no matter how small we think it may be, or how vile. The fact is, God's grace is greater than all our sin—than any sin. No sin is too vile that God cannot forgive it, and no sinner is so bad that God cannot redeem him.

We see this played out in the life of Saul of Tarsus. Saul was a fervently religious Jew who thought he was serving God by persecuting members of a new sect. They called themselves the Way (Acts 9:2, 19:9), and they claimed that their leader, who had been crucified for claiming to be God, had risen from the dead. Further, they were preaching that only by faith in this Man's name—Jesus—could anyone be saved. Saul would not believe the Man's "lies" and was zealously persecuting the followers of Jesus, even to the point of entering houses and dragging off men and women to prison (Acts 8:3).

It was in the context of Saul's ongoing, zealous persecution of the church that he encountered the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9). After his vision of Jesus and sudden conversion, the blinded Saul was told to go into the city of Damascus and to wait for instructions. Several days later, Jesus appeared to a disciple named Ananias and told him to go lay his hands on Saul so that he would receive his sight. Ananias responded as we might respond. He said something like, "What? You mean the Saul of Tarsus who has been persecuting the church and killing the saints?! You mean the guy who came here with the purpose of imprisoning believers?!" And Jesus replied to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:15–16).

Years later, while writing to his young disciple Timothy, Saul, also called Paul, would recount his conversion experience:

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life (1 Timothy 1:12–16).

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is "exceedingly abundant" toward sinners—all sinners. That was the reason Jesus came to earth, lived a perfect life, and then suffered and died—to save sinners. There is no sin too great that God cannot forgive, and no sinner so bad that God cannot change. God delights in taking persecutors and turning them into worshippers.

Paul said that he had obtained mercy that he might be an example of the great patience of Christ for those who would believe. And he serves as an example for all of us who do believe. If we think that God will not forgive us or someone we know and love for some sin, we can think of Paul. And remember that Jesus is all-forgiving; His death on the Cross is sufficient payment for ALL the sins of those who repent and turn to Him.

All sinners will be judged. As Paul told the Corinthians:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,

nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9–10).

But, we can thank God that those who have repented of their sins and trusted in Christ—in His perfect life, His substitutionary death, and His powerful Resurrection—are forgiven, washed, cleansed, and made righteous because of what Jesus did on the Cross. Paul followed this bad news of judgment to the Corinthians with the good news of forgiveness.

And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11).

There is no sin we might commit that is so great that it is beyond the reach of God's forgiveness in Jesus Christ. And there is no person who is so wicked that the grace of God may not touch his heart to convert him. No! Jesus is exceedingly abundant in grace. He died that men could be forgiven. As the writer of this hymn so elegantly wrote:

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Jesus, you are glorious! The incredible way you reached down to Saul the Pharisee and used him for your glory reveals your grace and mercy. Saul's life of faith after his conversion is an example for me. He willingly suffered in order to preach the name of his Lord. Circumstances didn't deter him from a life of faith. He kept his eyes on the eternal. Lord, I pray for such faith. Even little things distract me and cause me to feel sorry for myself. Grow in me, Holy Spirit, a heart joyfully surrendered to your will—one that is content in suffering. And may my students learn from Paul. Give them an understanding of what it means to be a new creation in Christ, that they would live their lives unashamedly surrendered to you and your Word, no matter the sacrifice.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will complete the Memory Verse Review Sheet. If time allows, have the students recite the verse together, to each other, or to you.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided an activity sheet on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Saul Is Converted Class Notes

MATERIALS

- ☐ Saul Is Converted Class Notes for each student
- ☐ Saul Is Converted Class Notes Answer Key
- ☐ Pencils or pens

INSTRUCTIONS

Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class. Have students fill in the blanks as you study the lesson.

We will be completing these class notes as we study the Bible passages. Do not work ahead.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete the class notes today, we will see what happened when Jesus appeared to a man who didn't believe He was the Messiah.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Refer to Lesson 10 Lesson Theme Poster. God's Word was spreading! The truth about Jesus was going into different nations! The Ethiopian man was ready for the truth about Jesus when God sent Philip to him. He heard, was baptized, and returned to his nation where it is likely he proclaimed the name of Jesus to his family, friends, and even the queen of Ethiopia whom he worked for!

Refer to Lesson 9 and 10 Lesson Theme Posters. The Christians in Jerusalem were being persecuted, put in jail, beaten, and even killed for their faith. But

➤ Use the New Testament History Poster included with your teacher kit as you teach the lesson to point out the events you are discussing.

this persecution, which was meant to STOP the Christians, was being used by God to spread the gospel to other nations. They would not stop preaching in the name of Jesus! And as they ran from their homes, they shared the truth about Jesus to those they met.

There was one Jewish man named Saul who was set on getting rid of the Christians. He was a well-educated man—and very religious. He knew the Jewish law, and he believed that what Jesus said went against the law he knew and loved. Because of this, he made it his mission to have the Christians arrested and put in jail—he even agreed that they should be killed! This man was hated and feared by the Christians.

But we are going to see today that God often has something good and wonderful planned in the middle of what looks like a terrible situation. Let's see what the Bible has to tell us about this powerful Jew named Saul.

Acts 9:1–2

Turn in your Bibles to Acts 9:1–2. We will begin reading there. *Choose students to read the verses.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Look at your Bible closely so you can answer these questions about Saul. Notice in verse 2 that he called Christians those “of the Way.”

Observe the Text

- ? Who can tell us what Saul was doing against the disciples of the Lord? *Acts 9:1. Breathing threats and murder!*

Yes. Saul hated Jesus's followers. He wanted to be rid of them! He had permission to find Christian men and women, bind them, and bring them to Jerusalem to be persecuted, put in prison, or perhaps even killed!

OK. Now you know a lot about what Saul was like. So for #1 on your class notes, circle all the answers that show what Saul was like before his conversion. After everyone is finished, I want you to take turns reading the ones you have circled. *B, C, D, E. Have students complete #1 on their class notes.*

Let's keep reading. Saul was on his way to the city of Damascus. He was on a mission to bring any Christians he found back with him to Jerusalem to be put in jail. We can read Acts 9:3–7 next. *Choose students to read the verses.*

Wow! This is an incredible scene right from the pages of history!

- ? What unusual thing happened to Saul? What did he suddenly see as he journeyed to Damascus? *Acts 9:3. A bright light from heaven.*
- ? And what did Saul do when he saw this bright light? *Acts 9:4. He fell to the ground.*
- ? What did Saul hear after he saw the light? *Acts 9:4. A voice.*
- ? What did the voice say? *Acts 9:4. Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?*

Acts 9:3–7

? Saul must have been in shock! Who was it that was speaking to him? Look in Acts 9:5. *It was Jesus!*

? Who can read #2 on the class notes? What happened to Saul? *Assign a reader. Heaven, ground, voice. Have students complete #2 on the class notes.*

? Now someone read #3 for us. What did the Lord say to Saul? *Assign a reader. Me. Have students complete #3 on their class notes.*

? OK. Did you catch what Jesus said in verses 4 and 5? Saul was on his way to persecute the followers of Jesus, but who did Jesus say Saul was persecuting? *Acts 9:4–5. Me/Jesus.*

Jesus had already died, risen, and ascended to heaven. But He paid Saul a supernatural visit on this day to tell Saul that when he persecuted Jesus's followers, it was the same as persecuting Him!

? What was Saul's response? How did he feel? Look at Acts 9:6. *He was trembling and astonished!*

? Then Saul called Him Lord. And he asked the Lord something. What did Saul ask? *Acts 9:6. Lord, what do You want me to do?*

? Right. And what did the Lord tell Saul? *Acts 9:6. Arise and go into the city. You will be told what to do.*

Wow! Saul was knocked down by a bright light and heard the voice of the Lord. And verse 7 says the men who were with Saul were speechless. They heard the Lord's voice, but couldn't see anyone.

? Let's read some more. Look at Acts 9:8–9. *Choose students to read the verses.*

? As Saul got up to go, he opened his eyes. But what had happened to him? Look in Acts 9:8. *He couldn't see!*

? What did those who were with Saul have to do for him? *Acts 9:8. They led him by the hand to Damascus.*

Yes. Saul was blind! Now is a good time to look again at our class notes.

? What goes in the blanks for #4? Who will read that for us? *Assign a reader. Astonished, You. Have students complete #4 on the class notes.*

? And #5? Someone read that. What happened to Saul? *Assign a reader. Blind, hand. Have students complete #5 on the class notes.*

So the Lord wanted Saul to continue on to Damascus. Because he was blind, Saul was pretty helpless. Suddenly, things were different for him. God was working out His perfect plan, and He was using Saul as a part of His plan.

God is always working! We can't forget it. We see it all the time in the Bible! And while Saul was being struck blind by Jesus on the road—there was a Christian named Ananias in Damascus who was also being given an assignment by the Lord. And this assignment included Saul. Ananias was to go and meet Saul in the name of the Lord so Saul could receive his sight back.

Acts 9:8–9

Acts 9:13–15

Let's read about Ananias and what he thought about his assignment from the Lord. It's in Acts 9:13–15. *Choose students to read.*

? What did Ananias know about Saul? Acts 9:13. *He had done harm to the saints in Jerusalem.*

Ananias had heard of Saul. He had heard about the terrible things Saul had done to the Christians in Jerusalem. And he knew that Saul was coming after the Christians there in Damascus.

? But the Lord answered Ananias and told him that He had His own plan for Saul. What was the Lord's plan? What would Saul do for the Lord? Acts 9:15. *He would tell others about Jesus. He would tell Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.*

Discover the Truth

God's plan for Saul was far different than what Saul had thought! But God was in control of everything! He stopped Saul with a bright light and spoke to him on the road! Saul was blind for several days. But the Lord Jesus had a plan for Saul, and Saul was now a believer! This man who was set on destroying Christians would now preach the gospel to Gentiles, kings, and Jews. Saul now believed the same thing about Jesus as the men and women he once persecuted!

? So who will read #6 on the class notes? How should we answer that? *Assign a reader. Job, others. Have students complete #6 on the class notes.*



READ THE WORD

Remember, Saul was the one who was trying to destroy the church. He wanted the Christians to be silenced! So he went from house to house dragging men and women from their homes and putting them in prison if they admitted that they believed in Jesus. But after his experience on the road to Damascus, Saul was very different. Saul's new faith in Jesus Christ completely changed him. And later Saul, also known as Paul, wrote about the change that took place in his life that day.

1 Corinthians 15:9–10

Let's turn in our Bibles now to 1 Corinthians 15:9–10. This book was written by Paul. *1 Corinthians 15:9–10. Choose students to read.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Paul wrote honestly about himself in these verses. Let's talk about them.

Observe the Text

- ? What did Paul think of himself? Did he think he was someone great? Look in 1 Corinthians 15:9. *Allow discussion.*

Paul did not think he was great. In fact, he called himself the least, or the lowest, of all the apostles.

- ? Why would Paul say that? Why did he think so low of himself? 1 Corinthians 15:9. *He persecuted the church of God.*

Right. He had persecuted the church of God. But after his conversion, he spent the rest of his life working for the Lord.

- ? Who did Paul give credit to for his work for the Lord? Why did Paul believe he was able to serve the Lord the way he did? Look in 1 Corinthians 15:10. *It was by God's grace.*

Paul had changed completely. And Paul knew that it was only by God's grace that he was able to do the things he did for the Lord.

- ? Go back to the class notes. Who will read #7 for us? What did Paul say about himself? *Assign a reader. Lowest, church. Have students complete #7 on the class notes.*

Good. When Paul, who was also called Saul, saw the Lord on that road to Damascus, he was changed once and for all. And the Bible tells us what Paul was willing to suffer for the Lord as he preached the gospel.

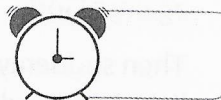
- ? Turn to 2 Corinthians 11:24–27 in your Bibles. Let's read that. 2 Corinthians 11:24–27. *Choose students to read the verses.*

2 Corinthians 11:24–27

- ? Paul suffered for Jesus! Let's go through what we just read again. I'm going to pass these strips of paper out to you. We're going to call out what Paul suffered one by one, and when you hear the one on your paper, come and put it up on the board for us. *Put the Paul Suffered for Jesus Mini-Poster #1 up on the board near the top and read it. Pass the rest of the mini-posters out to the students. As you name the sufferings of Paul, have students come up and put their mini-posters on the board with poster putty.*

Discover the Truth

Paul had met the living Jesus. And now he was completely different. This powerful, Jewish religious leader used to want to KILL Christians and destroy the church. But after Paul believed in Jesus, he traveled from city to city where he preached and praised the name of Jesus—even though he knew the trouble it would bring him. *Refer to the mini-posters on the board.*



➤ If time allows, assign students to re-read the points on the class notes as a review and briefly discuss them.



Truth Be Told Review Game

MATERIALS

- ☐ Truth Be Told Game Board
- ☐ Truth Be Told Question Cards
- ☐ Truth Be Told Question Answer Key
- ☐ Truth Be Told Number Cards (or dice or spinner)
- ☐ Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team
- ☐ Poster putty

INSTRUCTIONS

Divide your class into teams. Teams will take turns drawing a Truth Be Told Question Card. Team members will take turns answering the questions. They will quickly determine an answer and give it. If they are correct, they will draw a Truth Be Told Number Card and move that number of spaces on the game board. As play proceeds, follow the directions on the game board. Alternate between teams as long as time permits.

We are going to review now by playing "Truth Be Told." I'll put you into teams. Teams will take turns picking a question card

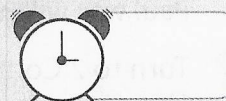
and answering the question. If the answer is correct, you will draw a number card and move your game piece that many spaces. All directions on the board must be followed. Place used cards underneath the stacks.

Answers to the questions are provided on the Truth Be Told Question Answer Key on the Resource DVD-ROM.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

That was a fun review of this exciting lesson about Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus. Congratulate the winning team.

Paul persecuted Christians until Jesus appeared to him in a bright light. When Paul met Jesus, everything changed for him. He became a believer and a preacher of the gospel. He suffered greatly for his new faith. But because of God's grace, he was able to live a new life in Jesus.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Refer to Lesson 11 Lesson Theme Poster. Saul started out on a journey to seek out and arrest the men and women who were following the way of Christ. His plan was to arrest them and take them to Jerusalem. Saul thought this was pleasing to God, because he believed the disciples of the Lord were against God.

Then suddenly, Jesus appeared to Saul in an amazing way. A bright, blinding light appeared from heaven, and Saul fell to the ground. It was Jesus calling him to serve! Yes, Jesus had a plan for Saul. Saul, who was also called Paul, was converted that day and changed from being a man determined to kill believers, into a believer of Jesus Christ himself. God had a plan for Paul to preach the gospel to the Jews, the Gentiles, and even kings!

What a change! Paul went on to do all that Jesus asked of him. He became a servant of Christ. And he was persecuted for it! He suffered greatly for the name of Jesus—he was stoned, shipwrecked, hungry, and more. But Paul always gave God the glory, because he knew he was able to endure such great suffering because of the grace of God.

Let's finish the class notes now. Look at #8. What was Paul like after his conversion when he believed in Jesus? Circle the letters for all that are true. *Assign a reader. A, B, D. Have students complete #8.*

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Maybe when you heard about Saul's conversion, you thought the same thing I did. How could someone like Saul, who was totally against Jesus, change into a man who was so completely for Jesus that he was willing to suffer terrible persecution for preaching the gospel? I mean, Saul became a totally different person after Jesus appeared to him.

? What do you think caused him to change so much? *Allow discussion.*

? 2 Corinthians 5:17 gives us the answer. This was written by Paul. Turn there in your Bibles. Will someone read it? *2 Corinthians 5:17. Assign a reader.*

2 Corinthians 5:17

The Bible says when we are in Christ we are a new creation. That means when we repent of our sins and turn to Jesus for forgiveness in faith, and receive His salvation, we will be changed. When Paul came face to face with Jesus, he realized he had been wrong—REALLY wrong. He had hated the one person who was the way, the truth and the life. Then Paul realized that Jesus was the true Messiah, not a faker or pretender. Jesus really was God in the flesh.

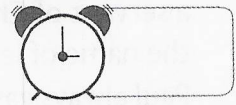
Paul had also hated Jesus's followers. He had been persecuting them. Then in a flash of light, he realized they were right, and he was wrong! Paul's life changed and he was sorry for the way he had acted. He turned from sin and became a new creation in Christ. The old things passed away. And everything—Paul's identity, his actions, his thoughts—all changed.

But this verse isn't just about Paul. See what it says there? It says "if ANYONE" is in Christ. If you are in Christ then you are a new creation. If I am in Christ, I am a new creation, and the old things are passed away.

When you make Jesus the Lord of your life, you will act and think differently, too. It's because you are a new creation. You are forgiven. You have the righteousness of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit dwells in you. So you will be willing to suffer for Christ like Paul did. And you will then be able and willing to share the gospel without shame, like our memory verse

► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.

says. You will be changed and new. Paul experienced that in his life, and we can experience that in our lives today, if we trust in Jesus and receive His forgiveness.



MEMORY VERSE

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God, for He makes all things new in the lives of sinners when they turn to Him in repentance and faith.
- Ask God to save the lost people that we know—giving them new life in Christ.
- Ask God for the courage of Paul to be unashamed of the gospel, to be willing to suffer, and to follow hard after the things of God in our lives, no matter the cost.