

Memory Verse

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

Knowledge of God's Will [God's Word]	Knowledge of God [God's Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The gospel was spread to Europe under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. 2. All the workers were prepared and ready to serve God's purpose. 	<p>God abides with and protects those who fear Him and faithfully do His work.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be ready in and out of season – prepare ourselves for God's work. 2. Hold on to faith in the face of tribulation. 3. Work together to serve the Lord with love.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. Paul Revisits the Churches
 1. Division Over John Mark
 2. Timothy Joins Paul and Silas
 3. The Macedonian Call
- B. Paul in Macedonia
 1. Philippi
 2. Thessalonica and Berea
- C. Paul in Achaia
 1. Athens
 2. Corinth
- D. Paul Returns to Antioch

Life Application

1. Be Ready In Season and Out of Season
2. Faith in the Face of Tribulation
3. Fellow Workers in Christ

Memory Verse

Conclusion: We must prepare ourselves so that we are ready to serve when God calls us, and strive to do our utmost to serve to the best of our abilities, knowing that He is faithful to those who are faithful to Him.

A. Paul Revisits the Churches

After an extended stay in Antioch, Paul was ready to depart on his second missionary journey. He proposed to Barnabas that they revisit their brethren in the churches that had been established during their first missionary journey (Acts 15:36).

1. Division Over John Mark (Acts 15:36–41)

Before they even departed Antioch, a problem occurred. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, but because Mark had departed from them at Pamphylia during their first journey, Paul refused. Their contention “became so sharp that they parted from one another” (v. 39). As a result, Barnabas took Mark with him to Cyprus by sea, while Paul took Silas with him through Syria and Cilicia.

2. Timothy Joins Paul and Silas (Acts 16:1–5)

When Paul and Silas came to Derbe and Lystra, the brethren at Lystra and Iconium recommended a disciple named Timothy to them. Timothy’s mother was a Jew, and his father a Greek. Upon meeting him, Paul wanted to bring the young man with him, and proceeded to take him to be circumcised. This was because the Jews in the area knew that Timothy’s father was a Greek; without circumcision, it would have been more difficult for Timothy to work for the Lord in the region.

3. The Macedonian Call (Acts 16:6–10)

As they traveled through the cities, Paul passed on the message set by the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:23–29; 16:4) and strengthened the brethren as they passed through. However, as they traveled through Phrygia and the Galatian region, the Holy Spirit forbade them from preaching in Asia and moved them to travel to the coastal city of Troas. There, Paul saw a vision at night, in which a Macedonian man stood and pleaded with them, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us” (Acts 16:9). Immediately understanding that it was God’s will, they sailed to Macedonia.

B. Paul in Macedonia

The first city they stopped in was Philippi, which was a commercial center for Macedonia.

1. Philippi (Acts 16:11–40)

a. Lydia, a Seller of Purple, and the Demon-Possessed Slave Girl

As was customary, Paul preached to the Jews there. God opened the heart of a woman named Lydia, a seller of purple. She and her household were baptized, and Lydia became the first European believer (vv. 11–15). They remained in her house for a time, but when they went to pray, a slave girl possessed by a spirit of divination followed them for days, crying out, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation” (v. 17). Paul, greatly annoyed, turned to her and cast out the spirit in the name of Jesus Christ.

b. Paul and Silas in Prison

The slave girl’s master, seeing that he had lost his source of profit, seized Paul and Silas and dragged them to the authorities (v. 19). The master falsely accused them of disturbing the peace by preaching foreign teachings. As a result, the multitude rose against them, and the magistrates commanded that they be stripped and beaten. After, they were thrown into

prison, and the jailer was commanded to keep them securely. Hearing this, he fastened their feet in stocks to ensure that they did not escape (v. 24).

Let's read verses 25–34. Under Roman law, a guard who allowed a prisoner to escape was normally put to death, hence his decision to kill himself; after all, what normal prisoner does not escape when offered the chance? Paul's call of reassurance must have been beyond belief, and further emphasized the mighty acts of God. But Paul's words did not only preserve the jailer's physical life; they led him to reconcile with God and offered the jailer and his family the spiritual life that is eternal salvation.

The next morning, the magistrates sent word that Paul and Silas be released. However, Paul refused to leave prison quietly. This would have made it seem like they agreed that they had done something wrong and, by extension, the Philippian believers. Not only were they innocent of any wrongdoing, but being Roman citizens, it was unlawful to beat or imprison them without due process. The magistrates were dismayed upon learning they were Roman citizens, so they came to escort them out of the city as a gesture of good will and public apology.

2. Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17:1–14)

After their release, Paul and Silas went to Thessalonica, where they preached in a Jewish synagogue. Many were persuaded, Jews and Gentiles alike. However, those Jews who were not persuaded, "becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all of the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason" (v. 5). Unable to find Paul and Silas, the Jews once again falsely accused them, this time of political revolution, so the brethren sent Paul and Silas away to Berea.

In Berea, many believed when they preached in the synagogue, but the Jews learned of their activities and once again attempted to disrupt them. The brethren sent Paul away a second time, this time to the sea, while Silas and Timothy remained.

C. Paul in Achaia

Those who accompanied Paul brought him to Athens, and he remained there and sent word for Silas and Timothy to join him.

1. Athens (Acts 17:15–34)

While waiting for Silas and Timothy, Paul's "spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols" (v. 16). Distressed by the city's state, he went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews and Gentiles. He also went to the marketplace daily to preach to passers-by. Hearing him, certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers became curious about his message. So, they brought Paul to the Areopagus, a place of philosophy, where religion and morals were discussed.

Paul immediately grasped the opportunity to preach. But rather than using the Scriptures as he normally would in the synagogue, he spoke in a way the citizens of the city would understand, even using one of their own monuments as an introduction to Jesus Christ, the living God and creator of the universe. Paul's sermon received mixed responses. Some mocked him while others showed interest. Some listeners, however, joined him and believed (v. 34).

2. Corinth (Acts 18:1–17)

Paul left Athens and went to Corinth, where he met Aquila and Priscilla. Because they shared an occupation as tentmakers, Paul stayed with them, working together with them while he preached in the synagogue every Sabbath.

When Silas and Timothy came to join Paul, Paul was compelled by the Spirit to testify to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. However, the Jews opposed Paul, so he left the synagogue and preached to the Gentiles instead. Many Corinthians were baptized, including the ruler of the synagogue and his household.

During one night in Corinth, the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city” (vv. 9–10). So, Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half to teach the word of God.

D. Paul Returns to Antioch

Eventually, Paul set sail for Asia again, this time passing through Ephesus, where Priscilla and Aquila remained. He then made his way back to Antioch in Syria, bringing his journey full circle.

Paul’s second missionary journey was a fruitful one. Despite constant persecution from the Jews, with God’s protection and guidance, Paul was able to preach of Jesus’ resurrection to both Jews and Gentiles in Macedonia and Achaia, resulting in many new European believers. His many methods of preaching are a valuable resource for those of us who wish to preach, especially his speech at the Areopagus, which is an exemplary sermon for us to learn from.

Check for Understanding

- 1. Why were Barnabas and Paul divided over John Mark? What was the result?** Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them, but Paul was against it because Mark had left them previously in Pamphylia, during their first missionary journey. They parted ways; Barnabas took Mark with him, and Paul took Silas.
- 2. Why did Paul bring Timothy to be circumcised?** Because the Jews in the region knew that Timothy’s father was a Greek, and without being circumcised it would have been difficult for Timothy to serve the Lord in that area.
- 3. Why did the jailer try to kill himself? When Paul stopped him, what was the result?** Under Roman law, a guard who allowed a prisoner to escape was normally put to death. Paul’s words did not only preserve the jailer’s physical life; they led him to reconcile with God and offered the jailer and his family the spiritual life that is eternal salvation.
- 4. What so distressed Paul about Athens? What did he do?** He was distressed by the city’s idol-worshiping practices. He went to the synagogue to reason with the Jews and Gentiles, and also went to the marketplace daily to preach to passers-by.
- 5. What was different about Paul’s audience in the Areopagus as opposed to his audience in the synagogue? How did he adjust his speech for them?** They were not Jews, so they were unfamiliar with the Scriptures. Rather than using the Scriptures as he normally would have in the synagogue, Paul adjusted his speech by using one of their own monuments as an introduction to Jesus Christ.

Life Application

- 1. Be Ready In Season and Out of Season**

“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” (2 Timothy 4:2)

While on his missionary journey, Paul did not neglect any of his responsibilities: he pastored the churches, strengthened the brethren’s faith, taught the truth, and preached the gospel. No matter the location, the audience, or the opposition, Paul sought to fulfill all of his responsibilities wherever he went. He exhorted Timothy to do the same, and to be ready to uphold his duties “in season and out of season.” To do something “in season and out of season” means to be prepared to do it at any time, whether the circumstances are favorable or unfavorable.

An idolatrous city, Athens lacked an “ideal” audience willing to listen to Paul, yet he preached everywhere he could – in the synagogue, to the Gentiles, and even in the marketplace. His persistence in the face of overwhelming odds opened the opportunity for him to preach in the Areopagus. Once in the Areopagus, however, Paul faced a very different audience compared to in the synagogue; accustomed to preaching to Jews, who had knowledge of the Scriptures, Paul now had to preach to an audience who had none. Yet he was able to do so, because he had already spent years preparing himself to preach to the Gentiles, and as a result, some believed. This is what it means to do God’s work in season and out of season.

We often like to wait for the “right time” to do something. Whether it’s something as simple as buying a fruit in season or waiting for an opportune moment to jump into a conversation, it’s important for us to wait for the ideal moment to do so. However, when doing God’s work, we will never truly know when the “right time” is – only God knows. Because of this, we must prepare ourselves so that we are ready to do His work whatever the circumstances may be. Moreover, it is important that we do not attempt to judge for ourselves when the right time is, but instead learn to trust in God’s guidance. “But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet 3:8). “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Prov 3:5–6). We are only human, but God’s will and timing are perfect.

Discussion: What are some ways we can prepare ourselves so that we are ready to do God’s work “in season and out of season”?

2. Faith in the Face of Tribulation

Paul and Silas faced persecution and many tribulations on their journey, but they were able to persist in their work because they held on to their faith in times of trouble. Their behavior when imprisoned is an example of this. They were able to pray and sing praises to God because they still had peace in their hearts despite the physical suffering they endured. Only those with faith are able to feel this peace because they know that God abides with them.

Paul wrote, “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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’” (Rom 1:16–17). Paul clearly saw that the gospel is the power of God that leads us to salvation when we have faith. Paul lived out this faith by facing tribulations without fear, maintaining his strong hope that as long as he held on to his faith to the end, he would enter the kingdom of God.

Today, whatever tribulations or persecution we may face, we must hold on to our faith. But in order to

do so, we need to first cultivate ourselves, because a strong faith does not come to us overnight. Even Abraham was doubtful at first (Gen 17:17), but later did not hesitate to offer his son to God (Gen 22:10). As a result, God swore to him that “in your seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice” (Gen 22:18). God has promised to protect and guide those who have faith in Him.

There will be times when we encounter difficult situations and face hard decisions. During these times, we must remember to hold on to our faith. No matter the situation, whether we are imprisoned, falsely accused, persecuted physically or mentally, or forced to choose between God and the world, faith is what gives us peace of mind in times of trouble, because we know that “he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Mt 24:13). We know that God has promised us that as long as we remain faithful, we will receive the crown of life (Rev 2:10).

Discussion: What kinds of tribulations have you faced, or think you will face? How can you overcome them?

3. Fellow Workers in Christ

An important aspect of Paul’s missionary journeys is that he never undertook them alone. The Bible records that each time, Paul traveled with someone, and in this case brought with him more workers as he journeyed – Priscilla, Aquila, and Timothy. But these people did not simply follow Paul because they were friends with him; they willingly uprooted their lives for the sake of the gospel, their faith in God, and their love for their brethren in Christ.

a. Serving the Lord in Love

Paul demonstrates what it means to work with our brothers and sisters in church when he meets with Aquila and Priscilla. Together, they not only worked hard in their daily trade for sustenance, but also in preaching the gospel and ministering to the brethren. The three continued to travel together, and in his later letters Paul made note of their love and sacrifice for the Lord (Rom 16:3–4; 1 Cor 16:19). Clearly the three were not simply bound by their shared occupation, but by their love and faith in God.

We must always remember to do our sacred work out of love, for without love, our work is in vain (1 Cor 13:1). Newly baptized members often leave the church because they do not see the love that they expected to see. As God’s children, our love ought to reflect the love of our heavenly Father that is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4–7. When we strive to grow in this love, we will learn to serve the Lord in love.

b. Working Together to Serve the Lord

King Solomon wrote, “Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Eccl 4:12). If we work together with our spiritual partners, the results will be much better than if we work alone. The benefit of working as a team can be easily seen and is of vital importance when serving God today. In fact, there is much work that simply cannot be done without the help of our brethren.

For example, some members who attended a medical school in Taiwan organized free medical services to those who lived in rural areas, and also organized evangelical services to preach the gospel in those same areas. As a result of their wonderful efforts, many were brought into the church. There are countless opportunities and many ways in which we can work together with

our fellow brothers and sisters.

As Junior 1 students, we may not have professional interests of our own yet, but we can still pray for God to guide us towards the work that He wants us to do. Once we discover our gifts, we should share the burden with members who have similar gifts, and work as a team whenever possible, so that we may support each other and strengthen the work.

Discussion: What are some ways we can show love towards our brethren in Christ? What work in the church requires working with others as a team, and which of those can you do today?

Memory Verse

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

Meaning:

1. As long as we love God, we can be assured that all events in our lives are in God’s hands, and that anything that happens to us, good or bad, is in accordance with His will. Knowing this, we can endure suffering with patience and with faith because we know that God is taking care of us and will always continue taking care of us. We are His chosen people, and God always wishes only the best for us as His children.
2. We who are His children have been called specifically by God. He chose us deliberately, for His purpose, and His purpose alone. No member in the church is useless. All are part of His body and serve Him in one way or another, so we must never neglect or belittle our fellow brethren in Christ but instead strive to work together with them to serve God.

Conclusion

There are many lessons that can be learned from Paul’s second missionary journey, but foremost among them is the fact that all were ready to serve God when He called them. Despite his young age, Timothy had cultivated a faith strong enough to prompt Paul to bring him on his trip, and Priscilla and Aquila willingly uprooted their lives a second time to follow Paul on his journey. Later, because of his training, Paul delivered a profound sermon to the vastly different audience in the Areopagus.

Another important lesson is the fact that no matter the circumstance, Paul and his companions served the Lord to the best of their abilities. Barnabas and Paul, despite their dispute, set forth to minister to the churches; Timothy was young, yet he willingly followed Paul; Paul and Silas, despite enduring harsh physical sufferings, remained peaceful at heart and prayed and sang hymns in their prison cell. All of them fulfilled their duties as God’s chosen no matter what tribulations they faced. From our examination of Paul’s second missionary journey, we can see that God will always guide and protect those who faithfully do His work.

Lesson 9 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does the memory verse teach us about the lives of those who love God?
We can be assured that all events in our lives are in God's hands and in accordance with His will. Also, we have been called to serve Him, just as all of our fellow brethren in church have been.
2. Why did Paul bring Timothy to be circumcised?
The Jews in the region knew that Timothy's father was a Greek, and without being circumcised, it would have been difficult for Timothy to serve the Lord in that area.
3. Why were Paul and Silas thrown into prison? What did they do while imprisoned?
The master of the slave girl falsely accused them of disturbing the peace when they cast out the spirit and removed his chance of profit. They sang hymns and prayed to God.
4. When Paul stopped the jailer, what was the result, beyond saving his physical life?
Under Roman law, a guard who allowed a prisoner to escape was normally put to death. Paul's words did not only preserve the jailer's physical life; they led him to reconcile with God and offered the jailer and his family the spiritual life that is eternal salvation.
5. What gives us peace in times of tribulation? Why?
Faith, because having faith means that we know that he who endures to the end will be saved, and that God has promised us the crown of life as long as we remain faithful to Him.
6. How can you prepare yourself so that you are ready to do God's work in season and out of season?
Personal answers.