

# GOD CHOOSES HIS INSTRUMENTS TO CARRY HIS NAME TO THE WORLD

YEAR: KNEEL / FOCUS: LIVING ON MISSION / SERIES: ACTS

## BIG TRUTH: GOD CHOOSES HIS INSTRUMENTS TO CARRY HIS NAME TO THE WORLD

Romans 1:1-2; Galatians 1:15; Ephesians 3:7; Colossians 1:25

### BIBLE VERSE: ACTS 9:15

*“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.’”*

### BIG IDEAS

- We are undeserving of God’s calling on our lives.
- God commissions us.
- God desires His name to go out to all the world.

### BIBLE PASSAGE: ACTS 9:1-18

### KNEEL: LIVING ON MISSION

The Kneel Year is an exploration of what it means to worship God with our all (Luke 10:26-28) and to use our influence to lead others to do the same. We know that as we pursue a life of worship, we will pursue a life of both wisdom and mission. Throughout this year we will study and pursue the wisdom of God through the book of Proverbs and the mission of God through the book of Acts, and we will learn how both of these things must inform and shape our influence as Jesus followers!

### SERIES AIMS



#### Every student should know...

- The gospel has the power to turn the world upside down.
- They are empowered and chosen to be a gospel witness in the world.
- Our salvation has come by grace alone.



#### Every student should feel...

- Comfort that the Lord is with them wherever they go.
- Hope in the God of salvation.
- Responsible to use their influence to live for Jesus alone.



#### Every student should strive to...

- Read, study, and meditate on the entire book of Acts.
- Memorize the Bible verse each week.
- Pray consistently for boldness to make Jesus known.



#### Every student should want...

- To pursue faithfulness in living on mission.
- To share the gospel with people in their lives who do not know Jesus.
- To sacrifice their personal freedoms for the sake of the gospel

### GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week’s Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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## BIBLE VERSE: ACTS 9:15

*“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.’”*

### God chooses people to fulfill His mission.

*“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name...’”*

- No one seeks God on his or her own. God’s Spirit draws people to Him. God’s Spirit is irresistible and cannot be denied. When God draws a person, that person will respond to Him. God chooses people and redeems them. He sets them free from their sin just as He did with Paul.
- God redeems people for His purposes. He chooses them to fulfill His mission on earth. He gifts them and equips them to do His will on this earth to bring glory to His name. No one who is living for God and sharing His truth with others is doing so of their own volition. They have been chosen and called to do so by God.

### God calls specific people for specific missions on earth.

*“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine...’”*

- Not only does God call people to Himself and redeem them, but He gives people specific missions during their time on earth. Paul had a specific mission to fulfill. We all play a part in the greater mission of God’s people which is to bring glory to His name, but every believer has a specific mission given to them by God.
- God calls people and gifts them for this mission. He equips them and sets them apart to do His will. He is with them always and guides them along the way in their lives.

### God empowers His people to do the mission He gives them.

*“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.’”*

- Paul had a specific mission for his life. God called him and saved him to do a specific thing for him. Paul was a part of the greater mission of God’s people—to spread the gospel, but his mission was specifically to the Gentiles and kings and children of Israel.
- We each have a specific mission and we are empowered to do it. God empowered Paul to fulfill the mission He gave him. He gave him strength and courage to do what He had chosen him to do. God does the same for every believer. He strengthens them and encourages them. He never leaves them.

# GOD CHOOSES HIS INSTRUMENTS TO CARRY HIS NAME TO THE WORLD

## **BIG IDEA #1: WE ARE UNDESERVING OF GOD'S CALLING ON OUR LIVES.<sup>1</sup>**

### **[ THIS ]**

Scripture teaches us that no person seeks God. This is because we are all born with a sin nature that rebels against God and His truth. Not only do we rebel against God, we are blind to His truth and His revelation of Himself through creation. We reject Him and choose instead to follow a path of destruction. This path leads us away from God, not toward Him. We see this clearly in Acts 9:1-3. Saul is a man with a lot of religious education. He knows the Law and even is perceived as a person of significance, yet he is a persecutor of Jesus' followers. While Jesus lived on the earth, Saul didn't believe that He was the Messiah. He believed in his own knowledge and understanding rather than God's revelation of His Son. Yet God in His great mercy called Saul to Himself. In Acts 9:4, Saul is walking on the road headed toward the town of Damascus when he encounters Jesus. He is blinded by a great light and hears Jesus' voice. It is in that moment that he understands truth, not because he has years of education or has spent his life obeying the Law, but because Jesus called him. Saul didn't deserve to encounter Jesus that day on the road to Damascus. He, in his own words, was the chief of sinners. But God called Saul and transformed him into Paul.

### **[ THEREFORE ]**

#### **Read Acts 9:1-4. What is significant about God's calling of Saul on the road to Damascus?**

Saul persecuted Christians and delighted in seeing them imprisoned and even killed. That God would call Saul to be one of His disciples seems contrary to how we think it should be. We might think that God should punish Saul instead of redeeming him. It's significant that God doesn't condemn Saul, but instead, He redeems him.

### **[ THIS ]**

Saul's conversion is important for every person because it teaches us about the character of God and about ourselves. It's easy for us to believe that we are better than Saul, but no one is deserving of God's calling on their lives. In our hearts, we are all like Saul because we are all sinful. No one deserves God's drawing of us to Himself. We do not deserve His forgiveness and redemption. Instead, we deserve to pay our sin debt which requires our death. God doesn't require this of those who repent and believe. He paid it for us. God does call His people to Him. He is sovereign and chooses whom He pleases to do His will. He calls us to fulfill His mission for us on this earth. We are His instruments just as Saul who later became Paul was God's chosen instrument.

### **[ THEREFORE ]**

#### **Why is it important to understand that it is God's sovereignty that chooses us and calls us to Him?**

It's important for us to know that we do not choose God, but He chooses us. We are not deserving of this call. 1 Peter 2:9, John 15:16, and Ephesians 1:3-4 teach us that God calls us. When we understand this, we can humble ourselves before Him and fulfill His call for us.

#### **How does our pride and self-love lead us to believe we earn God's call on our lives?**

2 Corinthians 5:15 shows us that we are naturally selfish, living for ourselves and not Jesus. Jesus died to set us free from this life. Galatians 5:26 teaches us that we are not to live for ourselves. When we do, we believe that we deserve the grace of God, when do not.

1. Acts 9:4: Saul was a persecutor of Jesus, yet Jesus saved him.

2. 1 Timothy 1:15: Paul sums up the Gospel by saying that Jesus came to save sinners and declares that he, Paul is the chief sinner of all.

# GOD CHOOSES HIS INSTRUMENTS TO CARRY HIS NAME TO THE WORLD

## BIG IDEA #2: GOD COMMISSIONS US.<sup>3</sup>

### [ THIS ]

To commission someone is to entrust a task to them. When you entrust a task or matter to someone it shows that you believe they are competent to complete the task. The truth that God commissions His people to fulfill His mission for them reveals that He knows that they will fulfill it. He trusts in His Spirit's work in their lives. In Acts 9:1-9, Saul was called and commissioned for God's service. Because Saul was blinded by the bright light, he could not make it to the town he was directed to go. He needed help getting there. God called Saul and then commissioned him. He sent him to Damascus to see Ananias, a disciple of the Lord's. It was through Ananias that God began to equip Saul to fulfill His mission for Him. God's call on Saul's life was not happenstance. He had a plan and purpose for Saul that was fulfilled according to His plan. He used His people to fulfill this plan and to equip Saul for His mission.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**How does God use other believers to equip one another to complete His mission?**

Hebrews 10:24-25 teaches us that God equips us with other believers to do His will. We become faithful followers of Christ and complete His will for our lives with the help of other believers. Ephesians 4:12 also shows us the value of other believers on our lives.

### [ THIS ]

Just as Saul was commissioned, every follower of Christ is commissioned by Him and for Him. This changes the purpose and meaning of our lives. It changes the direction of our lives. Saul was on the road to Damascus. He was headed to the town of Damascus for his own purposes, but he encountered Jesus and his purpose changed. He still went to Damascus, but for a different mission. When we are called, we are commissioned. The direction of our lives is no longer the same path of destruction. Instead, we walk on the path of life. Saul went to Damascus to receive equipping and instruction on how to fulfill God's specific mission for his life. Our commissioning means that we, too, are equipped to do what God has called us to specifically do. To do this, we must turn our hearts away from our own purposes and submit to God's plan and purpose.

### [ THEREFORE ]

**What are some challenges you face in accepting that God's commissioning of you changes your direction?**

Galatians 2:20 and 5:24 tell us that anyone who would follow Christ must crucify their flesh nature. If we are to fulfill our purpose, we must die to ourselves. Luke 9:23 teaches us that following God means our lives are no longer our own. This means that we are no longer following our own path, but we are on God's path. Often our selfishness challenges this.

**Read Acts 9:17-19. How does God's commissioning of you give you strength and hope to fulfill His mission for you?**

When we follow God's path and His direction for our lives, He places the necessary and best people in our lives to equip us. These people along with His Spirit enable us to fulfill His mission for our lives. This strengthens us and gives us hope to do what He has called us to do.

3. Acts 9:6: When Saul was called, he was also commissioned to do what God called him to do. He was instructed and equipped to fulfill the mission God had given him.

# GOD CHOOSES HIS INSTRUMENTS TO CARRY HIS NAME TO THE WORLD

## **BIG IDEA #3: GOD DESIRES HIS NAME TO GO OUT TO ALL THE WORLD.<sup>4</sup>**

### **[ THIS ]**

In Acts 9:1-18, Saul is called, redeemed, and commissioned to carry the gospel into the world. By carrying the gospel to the Gentiles, Saul was to carry the gospel beyond the realm of the Jewish people. No longer would the gospel remain just with the Israelites. God's eternal purpose of making His name famous in all the world was becoming a reality through the calling and equipping of Saul. Saul was the most unlikely person to call to do this mission. Saul, an avid persecutor of Christians, would be the one to carry the good news of Jesus to Gentiles! He would be the one to first preach the gospel in Europe and the result would be the spread of the gospel to far-reaching places. Just as Saul was passionate as an unbeliever, he was passionate as a follower of Jesus. He passionately fulfilled his mission to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, risking everything to tell anyone and everyone about the Jesus he encountered on the road to Damascus.

### **[ THEREFORE ]**

**How does Saul's calling and equipping show that God desires His name to go out to all the world?**

Matthew 28:19, Psalm 96:3, and Mark 16:15 show us that God's desire is that people proclaim His name everywhere. When we look at the calling of Saul, we see that God does indeed desire His name is proclaimed everywhere. Because of Saul's life, the gospel has spread.

### **[ THIS ]**

God has given the same calling to every believer that He gave to Saul. He has commissioned His people to carry His name to all people everywhere. Acts 9:1-18 shows us that God wants others to know about Him. God's desire for His name to go out to all the world is for them to know that He is the only way to be saved from their sin. If people are to know God, they must hear about Him. This is God's desire—that people hear about Him. God does want people in every part of the world to hear His truth. He has designed His gospel to be one that is shared. He has equipped His people and gathered them so they will go out and tell others what has happened to them. Telling others about Jesus is telling them about the grace and mercy that we have received. It is telling them that Jesus died for us and that He forgave us of our sin debt. It is telling others that this same forgiveness is available to them. This is what it means to carry His name to all the world.

### **[ THEREFORE ]**

**Why do we hesitate to carry the gospel to other parts of the world?**

Sometimes we are ashamed or embarrassed of the gospel because we fear what others think of us, but Romans 1:16 teaches us that there is no room for shame where the gospel is concerned. Galatians 6:9 also teaches us that we should not grow weary in sharing and working what God calls us to do.

**What excites you about carrying God's name to all the world?**

1 Thessalonians 1:4, John 15:16, and Ephesians 1:3-4 remind us that we are chosen by God for His purposes. We should be excited that the God of the universe chose us and gives us a purpose. To be chosen and commissioned by the Creator of everything is a remarkable thing and we should feel awe and wonder that He even thinks of us. It should excite us to live our lives for Him.

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4. Acts 9:15: Saul was called to carry the gospel to the Gentiles and the world.