CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
FEBRUARY 14 2026

Scripture Story: Acts 9:1-18.
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 12-14.

go the distance



Photo by Terrill Thomas

flashlight

"In the record of the conversion of Saul important principles are given us, which we should ever bear in mind. Saul was brought directly into the presence of Christ. He was one whom Christ intended for a most important work, one who was to be a 'chosen vessel' unto Him; yet the Lord did not at once tell him of the work that had been assigned him. He arrested him in his course and convicted him of sin; but when Saul asked, 'What wilt thou have me to do?' the Savior placed the inquiring Jew in connection with His church, there to obtain a knowledge of God's will concerning him" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 120).

keytext

"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

(Philippians 3:13, 14, NIV)

what do you think?

The 2026 Winter Olympics are being held from February 4-20, in Beijing, China. It is a showcase of amazing athletes, all of whom spent years honing their skills in preparation for this moment—their moment.

On a scale from 1 (absolutely essential) to 5 (not too essential), rank the following items in terms of their importance to an athlete when preparing for success in Beijing.

____ rest
____ a healthy diet
____ dreams and goals
____ practice
____ determination

did you know?

Did you know that the apostle Paul traveled and shared the good news about salvation through Jesus in ancient Greece? Paul was particularly familiar with the sporting events of the Greeks. In fact, no other Bible character used as many sports metaphors to describe his journey with God and that of others. For instance, as he neared the end of his life he wrote this to a young follower named Timothy: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7, NKJV).

INTO THE STORY

"Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'

"'Who are you, Lord?' Saul asked.

"'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 'Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.'

"The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

"In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, 'Ananias!'

"'Yes, Lord,' he answered.

"The Lord told him, 'Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.'

"'Lord,' Ananias answered, 'I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.'

"But the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.'

"Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.'

"Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized."

(Acts 9:1-18, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Mark the parts of this amazing story of transformation that are new to you. Had you ever heard of Paul, the man who shared the love of Jesus throughout the ancient Roman Empire? If so, what most stuck in your mind about him?

What was Paul doing before God stopped him on his way to Damascus? What words are used to describe him?

Who are some of the other players in this drama? What are their roles? For instance, what is Barnabas doing for Paul? What about Ananias?

How did people who knew Saul before his conversion experience react to him afterward? Did this discourage Saul?

What does this biblical episode teach us about Jesus?

Why do you think God struck Saul with a temporary case of blindness?

punch lines

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life" **(John 6:63, NIV).**

"He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way" **(Psalm 25:9, NIV).**

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" **(Romans 12:1, 2, NIV).**

"Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it'" **(Isaiah 30:21, NIV).**

"Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy" **(Proverbs 28:13, NIV).**

further insight

"The prayers of the penitent Pharisee were not in vain. The inmost thoughts and emotions of his heart were transformed by divine grace; and his nobler faculties were brought into harmony with the eternal purposes of God."

—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 120

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read John 6:63.

Complete this week's *What Do You Think?* activity. How did you rank the items listed? Which was most important to you? When an athlete has all five items working in their lives, they are poised for greatness. Spiritual transformations are not much different. They require certain items such as a call to change, acceptance of Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, a vision of a new life in Christ, a desire to please God, prayer, Bible study, and faith sharing—to name a few.

Which of the items above is most important in one's journey to transformation? Explain.

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Now read John 10:9 to find the answer. This is the door that Paul used to begin his journey.

Sunday

Read Psalm 25:9.

After reading the *Into the Story* section, complete the Out of the Story questions. After reading this powerful episode, one has to wonder why Jesus would bother with someone who was against His followers.

From what you've read so far about Paul in this week's lesson, share in your own words what you believe Jesus saw in him. What qualities did he possess that God wanted to use?

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What does Paul's story teach us about God's ability to change people, no matter what they've done?

Monday

Read Philippians 3:13, 14.

This Sabbath's *Key Text* is taken from one of Paul's fantastic letters. In it he writes to members of the Christian church in a place called Philippi, in ancient Greece. Note his use of a sports metaphor here again. He presses toward the prize, conscious that he hasn't attained it as yet.

Hidden in this Scripture is a very important skill that runners have to master. Read the Key Text again and write what you think the skill is and how it pertains to to the Christian life.

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Tuesday

Read Proverbs 28:13.

This week's *Flashlight* quotation is quite powerful. For instance, we are told that God was working to convert Saul because he was a "chosen vessel." But chosen for what? That must have been on Saul's mind when his world turned upside down on the road to Damascus.

God had to prepare Paul for a special ministry. Part of that preparation required him to be a part of a church family, as the quotation notes. In your own words, explain why you believe God felt that Paul needed a church family, a group of like-minded believers.

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Wednesday

Read this week's *Punch Lines*. Choose one or more to commit to memory today.

One of the truly beautiful parts of Paul's transformation was his willingness to submit himself totally to Jesus Christ, the kind of submission mentioned in the Romans 12:1, 2 Punch Line. But Paul went even further. His desire to know Jesus was so strong that he immersed himself in the Bible that he had, which largely consisted of the Old Testament. Paul wanted to grow to become all that God wanted him to be.

Years later Paul wrote to the Philippians about how he lived his life. Read Philippians 1:21. How did Paul describe his life?

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By surrendering like Paul, you can be transformed by the power of Jesus Christ in your life today.

Thursday

Read 2 Timothy 4:8 and Romans 8:38, 39.

It would be nice to think that Paul's life after transformation was easy. Nothing could be further from the truth. Read 2 Corinthians 11:25-28. Why was Paul willing to endure so many trials? Why didn't he give up?

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Revisit today's reading in 2 Timothy 4:8 and Romans 8:38, 39 to find out the secret of Paul's strength. God offers you the same strength for the challenges you face in life.

Friday

Read Isaiah 30:21.

Are you headed down the wrong path in life? Do you want God to put you on the path that He designed for you? Why not take a moment and pray, asking God to do that for you right now? Don't worry about saying a bunch of fancy words to God. Just ask God the same question that Paul asked Him: What do You want me to do?

God will lead you to your destiny! Keep trusting Him (Jeremiah 29:11).

this week's reading*

The Acts of the Apostles (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 12-14.

* Unlikely Leaders is a special adaptation of *The Acts of the Apostles* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.