

DIGGING DEEPER

A Guide for Reflection and/or Discussion

Welcome to ***Untouchable***. While in many ways we've just scratched the surface of Paul's life and teachings, we've also covered a lot of ground in a manner we hope has brought the Scriptures to life for you in a fresh way. We hope you'll take the time now to dig deeper into Paul's Story¹ and writings in order to unpack more of their meaning for your life. To that end, we've prepared a few studies that look into some of the Biblical texts upon which *Untouchable* is based. These can be used both for individual reflection and for group discussion. It is recommended that you have a journal or notebook handy because, as Saul found out, you never know when Jesus is going to show up and say something you'll want to remember!

One – Get In!

Saul's conversion is described to us for the first time by Luke in Acts 9:1-19, and this passage provides the primary framework for our contemporization. Read the passage (aloud if possible), then answer the following questions:

1. What things in Saul's past and present behavior make it seem unlikely that he will ever be a follower of Jesus?
2. How does Saul respond to the instructions given him by Jesus? Why has Saul just gone from seeking the death of followers of Christ to obeying Christ's commands?
3. What do you think happened within Saul during his three days of blind fasting (Acts 9:9)?

Okay, now that we've look a little at the text, let's try to find some personal parallels.

1. Were/are there things in your life that make your following Christ seem unlikely to yourself or to others. If Christ could handle Saul's former ways, can He handle yours? How? If that's not happening, then why not?
2. Saul's encounter with Christ moves him to a radical change of life. Have you had a similar encounter with Christ? If so, how would you describe that encounter – how does your Story begin?
3. Ananias, a follower of Christ, does not want to speak with Saul because of Saul's past behavior (9:13). How have you experienced this dynamic – on Ananias' side, Saul's side, or both? How does Ananias ultimately act? Why?

4. Saul had to wait three days to learn more fully what Christ expected of him. How has waiting for Jesus to reveal His will impacted your Story?

Two – Get Out of Jail Free!

Paul continues to work on our perspective and attitude with his stirring writing in Romans 8:31-39. Read the passage, then answer these questions:

1. What do you think is the biggest thing Paul is trying to get across to you?
2. Paul paints a brief picture of a courtroom in verses 33 and 34. In *Untouchable*, how does Paulie use this metaphor? How does it matter to you?
3. If God is the only one who has the right to condemn you but has chosen to justify you instead, how does that change your outlook? If Jesus has "got your back all the time for all time", how does that change your attitude about life?
3. If truly nothing can separate us from the love of God, why do we sometimes feel separated from Him? If Paul were here to speak to you now, what would he say in response?

Three – Get Ready!

It is ironic that, as Saul, he persecuted the followers of Christ; as Paul, he was the target of persecution himself. In the end, he could dish it out AND take it! Paulie says in *Untouchable* that "persecution is a sure mark of belonging to God. I like that. I got marks all over me, but I'm still untouchable." Paul discusses the reality of persecution in one of his letters to Timothy. Read 2 Timothy 3:10-17, then answer the following questions:

1. According to Paul, who will be persecuted? Why?
2. What was the end result of the many persecutions suffered by Paul?
3. How does Paul encourage Timothy to prepare himself to live for God?
4. Why do you think people persecute those trying to "live a godly life in Christ Jesus?"
5. Have you felt this kind of persecution? Why or why not? What kind of persecution have you experienced because of following Christ? How did it affect your relationship with Jesus?
6. How are the two resources Paul recommends to Timothy pertinent to us in striving to follow Christ today? How will they help us handle persecution?

¹ Throughout this guide, a capital "Story" refers to the account of a person's individual journey into their life with Christ.

Four – Get Set!

Read Philippians 1:12-26. In this passage, Paul describes the outcome of some of the persecution he has suffered.

1. What has resulted from his imprisonment in the lives of others? How has Paul's attitude been affected?
2. What does Paul mean when he says "to live is Christ, to die is gain?" How does that translate into how he lives?
3. People come to Christ as a result of seeing Paul's faithfulness in the face of persecution. How is that possible today? How is that possible in your life?
4. If you were to truly adopt Paul's motto "To live is Christ" today, what would your life look like? What will get you there?
5. Read Galatians 2:20. How does Paul's view of his old life impact the way he lives? How does your view of your old life impact yours? What do you need to change?

Five – Get Over Yourself!

In our last discussion, we looked at the things in our lives that made us unlikely objects of Christ's attention or affection. In 1 Timothy 1:12-17, Paul paints a concise yet grim picture of himself in terms of the kind of person he was before Christ met him on the road. Read the passage and answer these questions:

1. What three words did Paul use to describe his former way of life? What three words would you use to describe yours?
2. What did Jesus do to Paul? How did He change everything for the apostle? Why?
3. What did Jesus do to you? How did He change everything for you? Why?

You'll recall Paulie's discussion of Timmy the Timid in *Untouchable*. Read 2 Timothy 1:6-14 to see how the apostle addresses Timothy's fears.

4. What role does the Holy Spirit play in the telling of our Stories? How do we prevent or enable this?
5. Often, having courage is a matter of having a larger perspective, knowing that what we fear in the moment ultimately has little or no power to hurt or affect us in any meaningful way. What things does Paul point out in this passage that give us a better perspective on what really matters? How are you doing at looking at life from this perspective? What can you do to improve your attitude?

Six – Get Movin!

One of the legal trials Paul refers to is found later in the Book of Acts. In Acts 26, Paul is in a pre-trial hearing of sorts before King Agrippa, where Paul recounts his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Here, Paul provides more details regarding both his past behaviors and the things Jesus says to him on the road. Read Acts 26:9-18 and answer the following questions:

1. Why did Paul call himself the worst of sinners? How did Christ's call turn his life around? What change is Christ calling you to make?
2. What did Jesus call Saul to do in verse 16? What will be the ultimate result in the lives of those who are on the receiving end of Paul's ministry?
3. In what manner are you called to serve and to testify? What could be the results? How can you get there?
4. Paul summed up his testimony with three sections:
 - a. Who he was before;
 - b. How he met Jesus; and
 - c. Who he is now.

Think of your Story, then write a brief paragraph summarizing each of these three parts of it.

5. Christ calls each of us in an individual, tailor-made way. Fellow Christ-followers are encouraged to hear each others' Stories. Just like Paul's, your Story also provides a road map for someone seeking Christ. If you're in a group setting, trade Stories with someone in your group, or with a fellow Christ-follower if you're working individually. Try sharing with more than one person.
6. Then (this is the most important part!), pray daily for Christ to provide you with the opportunity, courage, and the words to share your Story within the next week with someone who is early in their journey towards Christ. Repeat this item on a weekly basis until you reach Jesus' side!

I will live Christ and share Christ fearlessly,
for His love has made me **untouchable!**