



Life in the Family

How Jesus Prepares
Us for Kingdom Life

through the life of Paul:
the one sent to the Gentiles (and us)

By
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At Your Pace Series

WHO IS THIS PAUL?

Have you ever wondered just who this Paul is? Next to Jesus Christ, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul is the most important person in the New Testament. This 6-part study in the Scriptures takes us through the life of this amazing man. We'll look at his background, conversion, growth, ministry, and imprisonments and how he responds to each. I pray that he becomes as great a friend, mentor, teacher, and example to you as he has to me as you grow in your life in Jesus.

I encourage you to spend quality time on each part of his life before going on to the next so you can figure out how his example helps you with your own *walk with the Father*.

If you're in a study group, you may want to take one aspect of Paul's life each time you meet, sharing with each other how it affects each person.

You can either print out this study so you can fill in your answers, or you can save the PDF to your computer and use the typing option available on most PDF programs to record your answers and input.

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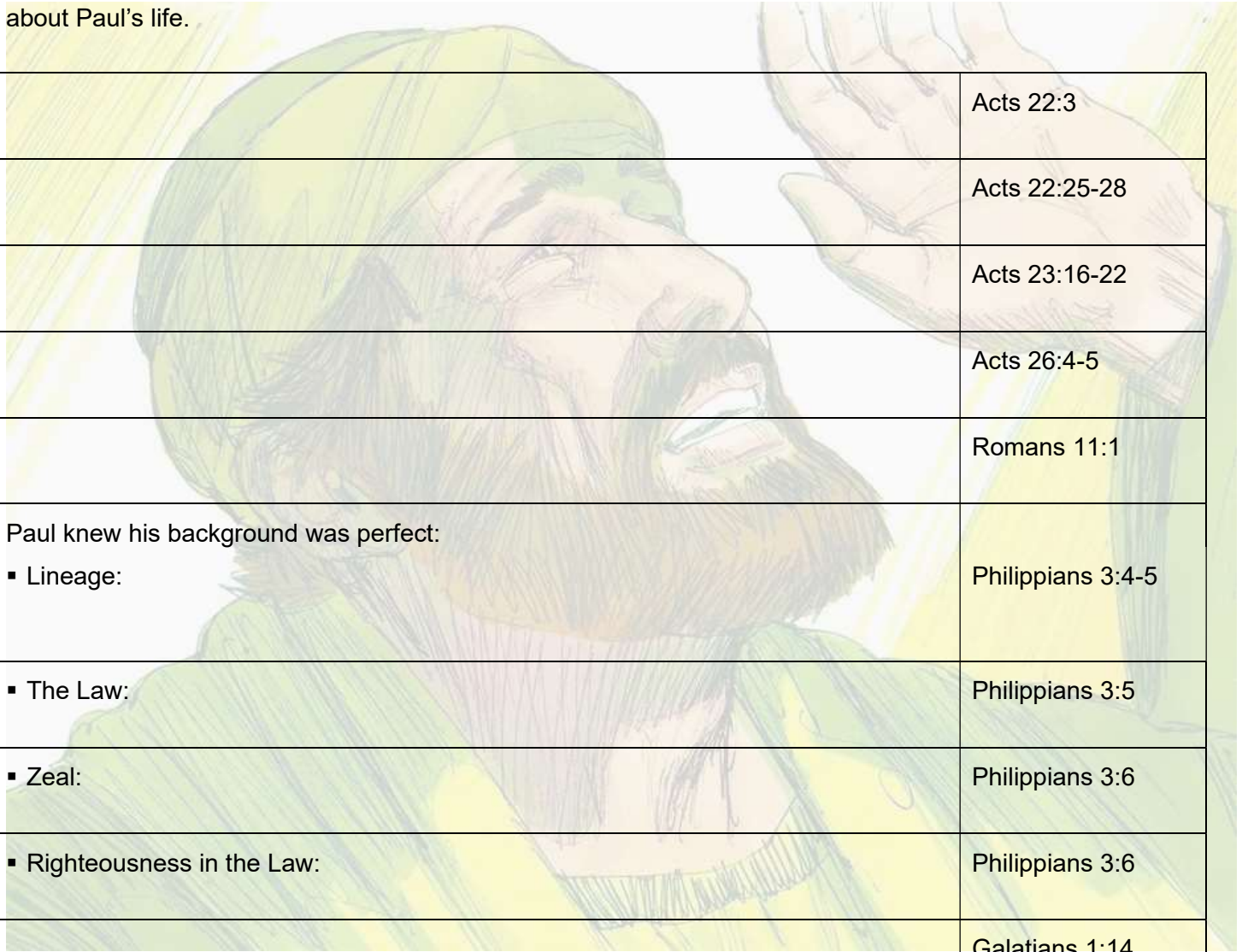
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Part 1 - Paul's Background

Fill in the blanks with information on Paul that the passage gives. Note: *Saul* is his Hebrew name and *Paul* his Greek name. Be sure you understand the context of what Paul says about himself.

I know it'll be frustrating to skip around the New Testament as you read what Luke writes in Acts and what Paul writes in his letters to the different churches, but going back and forth is important as we find out information about Paul's life.



	Acts 22:3
	Acts 22:25-28
	Acts 23:16-22
	Acts 26:4-5
	Romans 11:1
Paul knew his background was perfect:	
▪ Lineage:	Philippians 3:4-5
▪ The Law:	Philippians 3:5
▪ Zeal:	Philippians 3:6
▪ Righteousness in the Law:	Philippians 3:6
	Galatians 1:14
	Acts 22:4
	Acts 22:19-20

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	Acts 26:10
	Acts 26:11
	Galatians 1:13

Summarize Paul's background: _____

How would you describe your background?

What similarities and differences do you have with Paul?: _____

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Part 2 - Paul's Conversion

Dr. Luke, the author of Acts, is the first to tell us about Paul's conversion. Then Paul first gives us two perspectives of his story that he told to different groups of people he was trying to win to Jesus. Finally, he summarizes his story when talking with Timothy, his young friend and son in the Lord.

After reading each account, summarize what differences you see in his story.

Dr. Luke's Version

Acts 8:1-3

And Saul was there [in Jerusalem], giving approval to his [Stephen's] death.

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

What do you find interesting about this telling of Paul's conversion? _____

Acts 9:1-19

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 [initial name for the followers of Christ], 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 couldn't see a thing.

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So those with him 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 saints 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 before the Gentiles and their kings and before 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, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

What observations did you make / what differences did you find from the previous account?

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Paul Tells His Conversion Story to the Mob in Jerusalem

Acts 22:4-16

I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, “Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?”

“Who are you, Lord?” I asked.

“I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

“What shall I do, Lord?” I asked.

“Get up,” the Lord said, “and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.” My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, “Brother Saul, receive your sight!” And at that very moment I was able to see him.

Then he said: “The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.”

Again, what observations did you make / what differences did you find from the previous accounts?

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Paul Tells His Conversion Story to King Agrippa

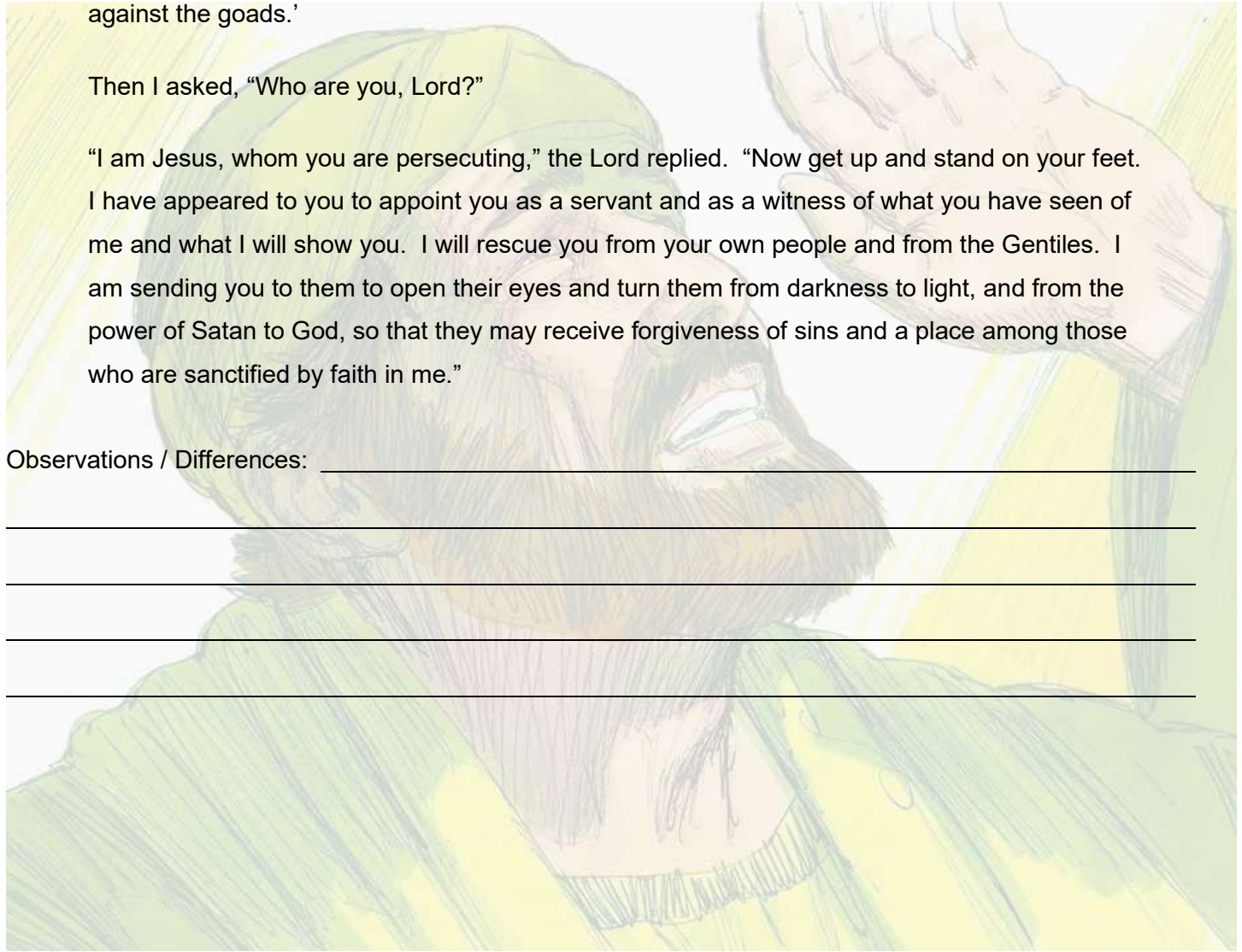
Acts 26:12-18

On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

Then I asked, “Who are you, Lord?”

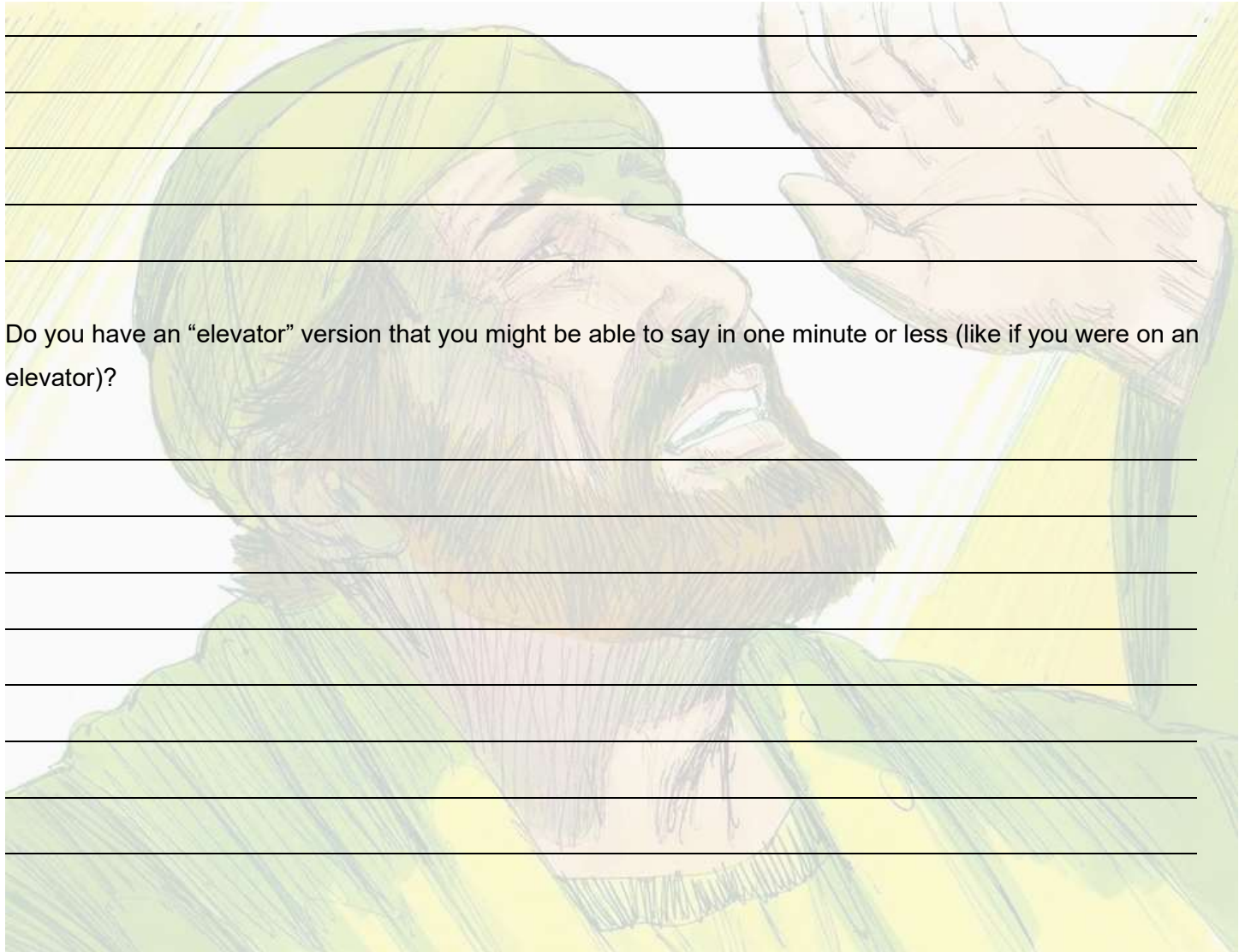
“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” the Lord replied. “Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

Observations / Differences: _____



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How might you tell your story differently in different situations to different types of people, old or young, male or female, same nationality or different, same religious background or different?



Do you have an “elevator” version that you might be able to say in one minute or less (like if you were on an elevator)?

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Now let's make this personal.

What have you gone through that has brought growth to you in your spiritual life?



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Part 4 - Paul's Ministry

Fill in the blanks with information on Paul that each passage gives.

	Acts 26:16-18
	Galatians 1:15-17
	Romans 15:20-21
	Galatians 1:11-12
	1 Timothy 2:7
	1 Cor. 9:1-2
	1 Cor. 11:1
	1 Cor. 15:9-11
	2 Cor. 1:8-11
	2 Cor. 11:5-22
	2 Cor. 11:23-29
	2 Cor. 12:1-10
	2 Cor. 12:11-13

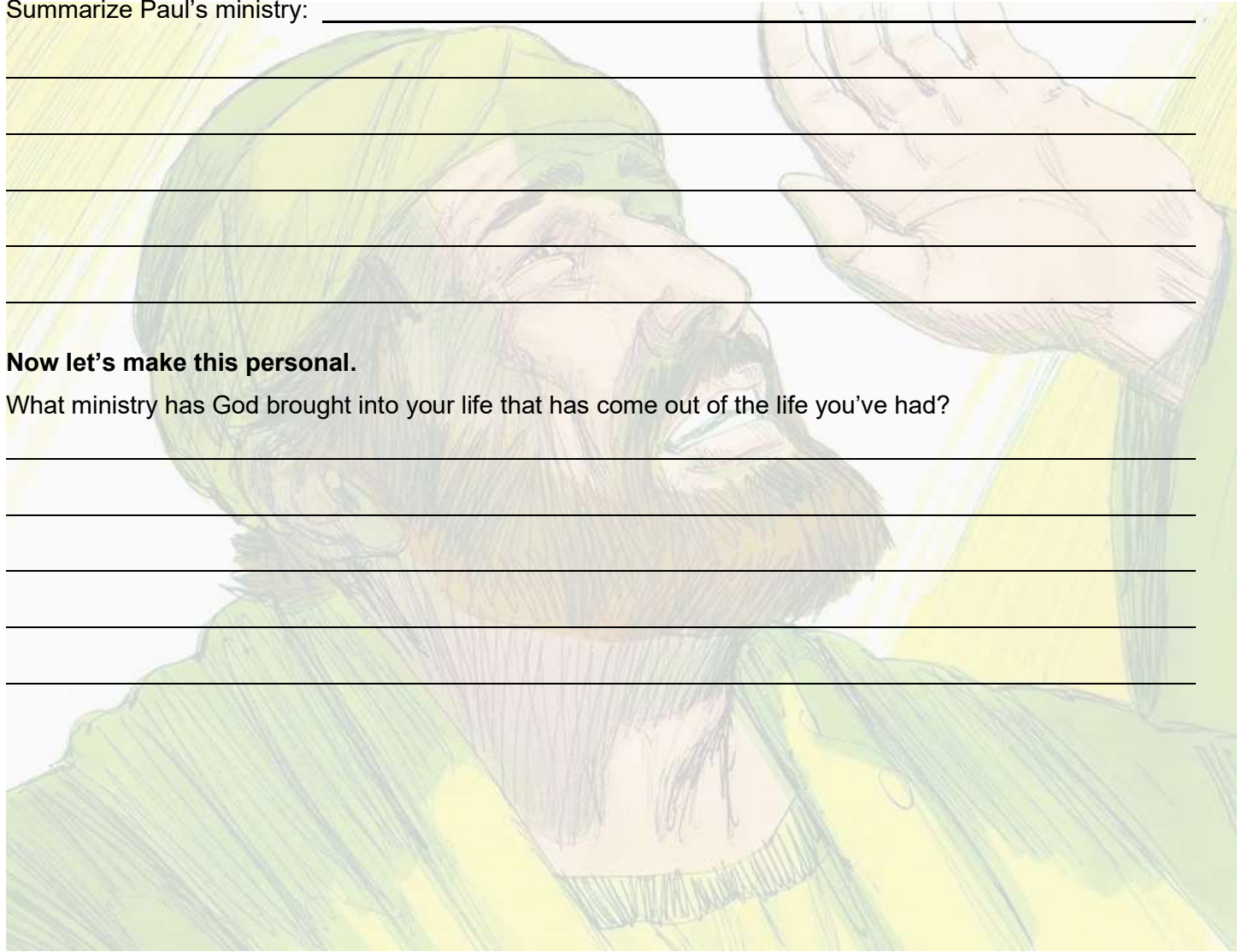
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	Gal. 4:12-15
	Romans 16:7, 11, 13, 21

Summarize Paul's ministry: _____

Now let's make this personal.

What ministry has God brought into your life that has come out of the life you've had?




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Part 5 - Paul's Imprisonments

Fill in the blanks with information about Paul's imprisonments from these passages.

Philippi with Silas

	Acts 16:1-5
	Acts 16-10
	Acts 16: 11-15
	Acts 16: 16-24
	Acts 16:25-40

Jerusalem, around 58 A.D.

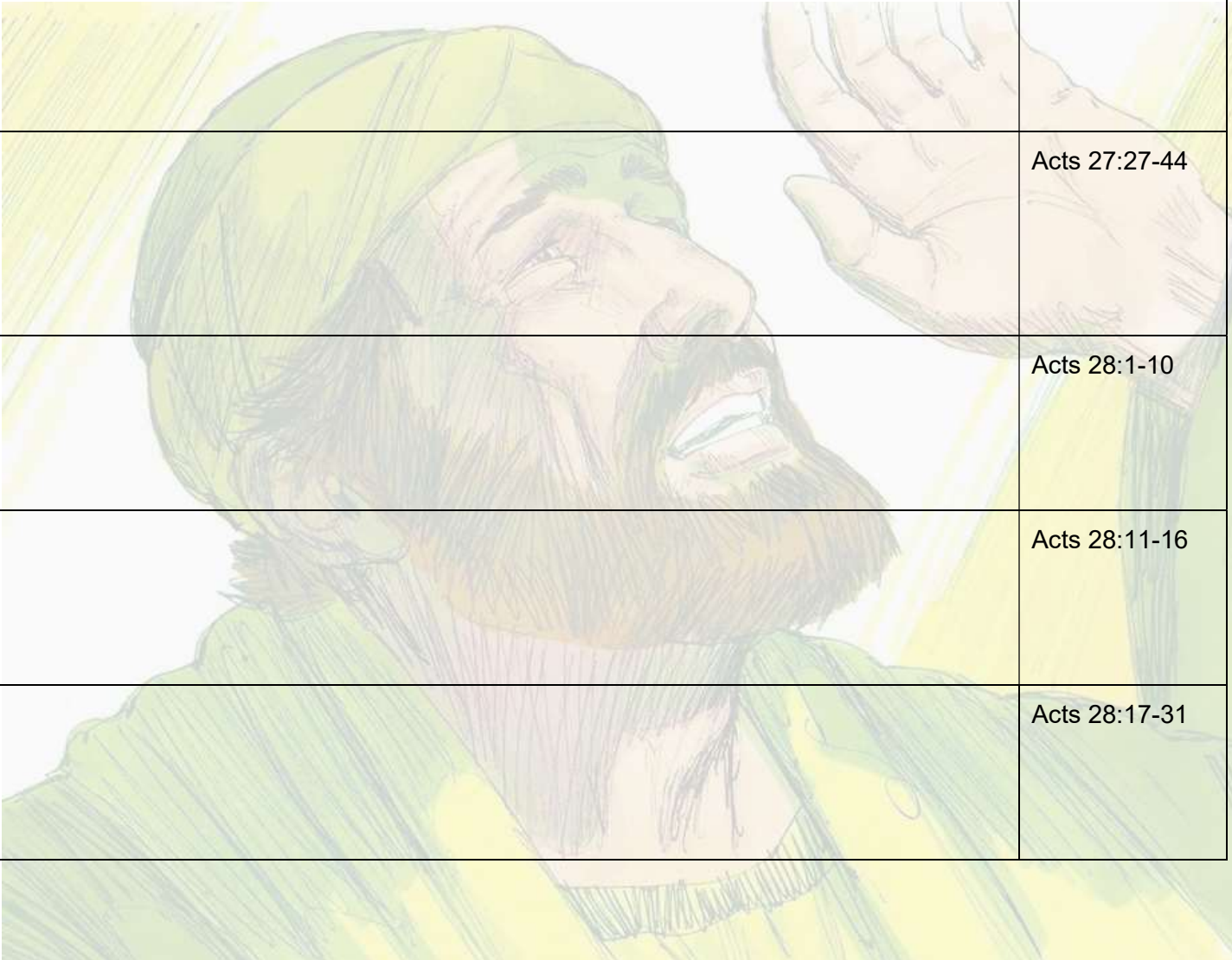
	Acts 21:1-6
	Acts 21:7-16
	Acts 21:17-26
	Acts 21:27-22:21

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	Acts 22:22-30
	Acts 23:1-11
	Acts 23:12-35
<i>Caesarea, around 58-60 A.D.</i>	Acts 24:1-23
	Acts 24:24-27
	Acts 25:1-12
	Acts 25:13-27
	Acts 26:1-32

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Trip to Rome, around 60 A.D.

	Acts 27:1-12
	Acts 27:13-26
	Acts 27:27-44
	Acts 28:1-10
	Acts 28:11-16
	Acts 28:17-31

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In Rome, Paul was under house arrest and had a fair amount of freedom to see friends and write letters to the believers.

	Ephesians 3:1
	<i>Ephesians 3:13</i>
	Ephesians 4:1
	Ephesians 6:19-20
	Philippians 1:12-14
	Philippians 2:19-22

Paul was probably acquitted by Nero sometime around 62 A.D. since no witnesses from Jerusalem had come to accuse him of anything.

The rumor circulated in Rome in 64 A.D that Nero had burned down the city so he could rebuild it was he wanted. To stop the rumor, he needed a scapegoat and so blamed the fire on the Christians since their areas of the city hadn't been touched by the fire (amazing protection from God).

Fierce persecution broke out against the Christians, and Paul was arrested again and sent to Rome—this time in chains and without any freedom. He was probably locked away in Mamertine Prison, a horrible place. Paul knew that he would probably be executed.

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Paul's perspective on what he suffered:

	2 Timothy 1:8-9
	2 Timothy 1:11-12
	2 Timothy 2:8-10
	2 Timothy 4:6-8
	2 Timothy 4:9-13
	2 Timothy 4:14-22

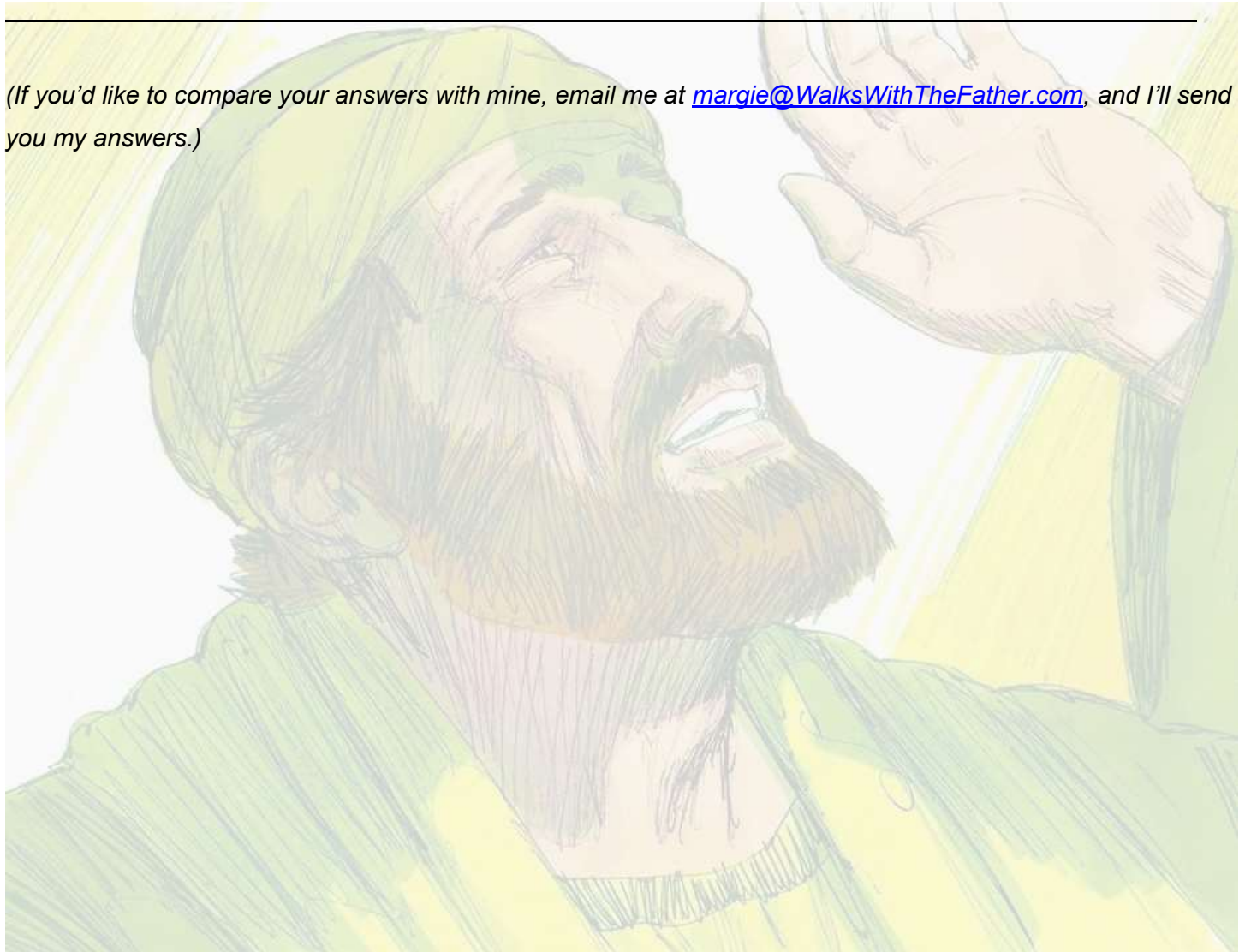
Paul was probably executed in A.D. 68; the charge against him was hating humankind. History tells us that Paul was executed by beheading, the typical style of death for convicted Roman citizens.

The persecution continued and spread throughout the empire. Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in A.D. 70. Jews and Christians alike had to run for their lives.

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Summarize what you've learned from Paul's imprisonments:

(If you'd like to compare your answers with mine, email me at margie@WalksWithTheFather.com, and I'll send you my answers.)



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Finally let's look at the lifestyle Paul wants Timothy (and us) to live when the struggles and pressures come his way, especially when the hard times come because we're followers of Jesus Christ.

	2 Timothy 4:1-5
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Need some more encouragement? When I was writing my 3rd devotional about the other men who knew Jesus, I was again sad about the family of God that John was writing to in his three short letters at the end of the New Testament.

Then I started in on Revelation and the words John wrote to the 7 churches in the first 4 chapters, and here's what I wrote:

What would the New Testament be without Revelation? If the last letters we had were 2 Peter, John's letters, and Jude, we'd wonder if Christianity would endure.

Revelation acts as a transition from *now* to *what will be* just as Acts transitions us from the Gospels to life in the Spirit. In the Gospels we see the babe in the manger, the good shepherd, the teacher of the disciples, the model of humility, and the Son of God who died on the cross. The apostles' letters lay out the deep significance of the resurrected Christ and what He accomplished.

Revelation shows Jesus Christ from a totally new perspective: He is the mighty ruler of all. He fights the final fight and wins. His enemies are defeated, and His followers are vindicated. When John sees him in this exalted state, he falls at Jesus' feet as though dead. (Revelation 1:17) But John didn't stay on his face. Jesus raised him up and showed him what is to come, and John came back to tell us.

If you're interested in understanding what John wrote about in the remainder of Revelation, you may want to check out my input on the *Left Behind* series. I don't retell the authors' storyline, instead I document the scripture that supports what they write. The Jesus in Revelation is different from the Jesus in the Gospels and the Jesus Paul knew, because the world is completely different after the Rapture, and those who were left behind knew that they had missed out.

But we're not done with this study . . .

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Part 6 - What Does This Mean for Me?

What have you discovered about the apostle Paul that you didn't know before that has encouraged your heart?

What would you like people to know about your life after you've been dead for a while?

What steps would you like to take starting today so you can be remembered in this way?



What a wonderful welcome Paul received when he left this world and saw his Lord face-to-face.

What a wonderful welcome we're going to have as well!