



February 2011

Our Guiding Light

DRAW NEAR—*Worship and and prepare your heart to hear from God.*

Have you ever tried to find you way around in the dark? It's not easy, is it? When the lights are on in my house, I can walk around with no problem. On the other hand, when the power goes out, I bump into furniture, bang my elbows on doorframes and stumble around until I find a flashlight. Even in a familiar place like my house, light is important. It helps me find my way around efficiently and safely.

We learned last month that Jesus came to be the Light of the world. God knows that we need light to help guide us. He wants to be that Light for us.

In John 8:12, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." We can choose to follow Jesus, or we can choose to stumble around in the dark. Which path will you choose?

Listen to the songs "I Will Follow" and "Here I Am To Worship" by Chris Tomlin. Pray that God will reveal His truth to you through His Word.

GO DEEP—*Dig into the Bible to learn truths from God's Word.*

If ever there was a person who enjoyed wandering around in the darkness, it was Saul of Tarsus. He participated in the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:58), he persecuted the church (Acts 8:3), and he terrorized Christians. Acts 9:26 tells us that the disciples "were all afraid of him."

Saul was a big, bad bully. He enjoyed making life miserable for people who wanted to follow Christ. Saul was completely lost in the darkness, but he didn't know it. He wouldn't find that out until a life-changing trip to Damascus.

Read the story of Saul's conversion in Acts 9:1-9.

Why was Saul going to Damascus? _____

Who spoke to Saul? _____

What happened to Saul after Jesus spoke to Him (vs. 8)? _____

We are made in God's image. But who is God? We already know from the story in Genesis that He is our Creator, but He is so much more. There's an old saying that goes something like this: "Before you can get someone saved, you have to get them lost." Think about it like this: when you first turn off the lights in your room at night, it is pitch black. You can't see anything. But after a few minutes, your eyes get used to the darkness and you can start to make out shapes. You can see, even in the darkness. The longer you sit in the dark, the more your eyes get used to not having any light.

Now imagine that you've been sitting in your dark room for an hour, and suddenly your mom walks in and flips the lights on. The sudden light would hurt your eyes, right?

That's what happened to Saul. His eyes were used to the dark. He'd been walking around in his sin for so long, that he had gotten used to it. So when he saw Jesus, the Light of the world, it hurt. He was literally blinded by the Light. And once he saw it, he realized how lost he had been.

Why do you think it's important that Saul became blind? What might he have learned from being blind and having to depend on others to guide him to Damascus?

Now read Acts 9:10-22.

Who was the disciple that the Lord spoke to about Saul? _____

What had Ananias heard about Saul (vv. 13-14)? _____

What did the Lord say about Saul in verses 15 and 16? _____

Even though Saul was sinful, and even though he had a horrible reputation in the church, God chose to use him. God had designed a plan for Saul's life. He wanted Saul to be a witness for Him. God has plans for your life, too. God's plan for us is to follow Christ.

He didn't promise that our road with Christ would be perfect. He didn't even promise that it would be easy. In Acts 9:16, He said that Saul would suffer. Following Christ takes sacrifice. Matthew 16:24-26a says, "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, turned from the darkness of his sin, and chose to walk in the Light. We can follow his example and make the same choice today.

GET REAL—Apply God's Word to your life.

Have you ever been around a really faithful person and wondered what his or her secret was? Maybe you admire your youth pastor and you wonder how he always seems to know what is right and how he stays so close to God. Maybe you think he knows a special secret that you just can't figure out.

People that are close to God do have something special, but it's not a big secret. They just know how to follow the MAP.

M – Make time with God a priority.

If you want to be close to God, you have to spend time with Him. Worship Him, honor Him and talk to Him about what's going on in your life. God wants a relationship with us, and relationships take work. You have to be committed to spending time with God every day.

A – Apply God's Word to your life.

Reading the Bible is a very important part of a strong Christian life. We need to know God's Word. It is the best way for us to get to know God. We also have to be able to use God's Word in our daily lives.

Look up Ephesians 4:29 and write it here: _____

Now, write down some ways you can *live* that verse. How would you take those words and use them in your daily life? _____

P – Purpose in your heart to obey God.

What do you think it means to “purpose in your heart”? _____

When you feel like God is leading you to do something, do it! He will always be with you, so don't be afraid to follow His will.

Write down Philippians 4:13 and memorize it this month. _____



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