

jenaministries – Part 1 Knowing God – Bible Study Worksheet

H) Why Not? - Worksheet

Read: Part 1 #4) Too Late for Me a Sinner?

Part 1 #9) What is Stopping You?

1. Is it ever too late for someone to be saved? Is there ever a sin too great?

2. Does a person have to stop sinning or change their lifestyle first, before they can be saved or serve the Lord?

3. Can you relate to the Apostle Paul's struggles and accomplishments? How could you possibly improve your service to the Lord?

4. What is your salvation story? What stopped you before that day?

4. Too Late for Me, a Sinner?

Some people believe it is too late for them to be saved and/or they can't be saved because they are a sinner. I don't believe that to be true for anyone.

Let's look at scripture referring the criminals crucified with Jesus (**Scripture 1 – Criminals Crucified with Jesus**):

One of the criminals being crucified alongside Jesus hurled insults at Jesus. The other criminal alongside Jesus repented and admitted he deserved to be crucified, but Jesus didn't and he asked Jesus to remember him. Jesus told that criminal he will be in paradise.

The second criminal repented just before he died, and he was saved. This criminal must have done something really sinful in his life since he was judged to be crucified. He admitted that he deserved to be crucified. There wasn't an opportunity for him to turn his life around and make things right first. He simply repented to Jesus and was saved.

So, you don't have to change your life first and stop sinning. You can come to Jesus as you are. If there is a sin that has a strong hold on you, Jesus will help you get past it. We are all sinners. No one deserves to be saved. Just because there is a sin you can't beat, don't let that stop you from repenting to Jesus. Jesus wants to go through the process of healing with you and help you.

Look at the Apostle Paul. Before he was saved, he was a Pharisee. His main goal in life was to take Christians to prison where they would most likely be executed (**Scripture 2 - Paul's Mission for Christians**). Yet Jesus forgave him and used him greatly for the kingdom of God.

It may seem unfair that a very bad person (like a serial murderer or rapist) can repent at the end of his/her life and still get to heaven; yet a good person who never repented to Jesus does not. But let's remember God knows everything. We don't know what's going on in anyone's heart and we don't know what happens in someone's heart just before the moment of death. So let God be God and don't question Him.

I have a family member (my Dad) who lived a long life (over 90 years) thinking that people who went to church were all hypocrites. He also would say "it's too late for me, I'm a sinner". It was in his last years of life when he actually agreed to occasionally attend service at my church. He eventually told me he had been wrong; not all church people are hypocrites. He really liked my pastor and his sermons, and learned a lot in just those few times he attended to my church service. Just a few days before he died, my pastor visited him in the hospital and my pastor told me that my Dad genuinely repented to Jesus.

As long as we have breath, it is not too late. Don't let a stronghold stop you from being saved. Let Jesus help you. Don't put off the best decision you will ever make because of a childhood belief or a stronghold sin. Reach out to Jesus as you are. Don't wait!

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4. Too Late for Me a Sinner

Scripture 1. Criminals Crucified with Jesus

Luke 23:39-43 One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at Him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” but the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Scripture 2. Paul’s Mission for Christians

Acts 9:1-2 Meanwhile, Saul (later called Paul) 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.

9. What is Stopping You?

The story of the Apostle Paul is compelling and speaks to us today.

So let's look at Paul's situation. He was raised from a child to be a Pharisee. Paul describes himself as a Pharisee (**Scripture 1. Paul as a Pharisee – Philippians 3:3-7**).

Paul (aka Saul) as a Pharisee was very successful and well known. Pharisees did well financially and had all the finest things (**Scripture 2. Pharisees loved money - Luke 16:14-15**). People all over the land knew who Paul was and what he was all about. He had a mission in life to take Christians as prisoners, which would probably lead to a horrible death (**Scripture 3. Paul's Mission – Acts 9:1-2**)

Jesus spoke about Pharisees as being prideful, selfish, and condemned to hell. Though they followed all the Jewish laws and traditions, they totally lacked in service, love, and humility (**Scripture 4. Jesus Spoke of Pharisees – Matt 23:27-28 & 33**).

So Paul was not only a prideful Pharisee, but he was a Christian killer, very strong and proud in his beliefs.

But God touched Paul in a miraculous way. Jesus struck him blind (**Scripture 5. Paul blinded – Acts 9:3-12**). God knew it would take something miraculous to get Paul's attention. The Lord touches each of us the way that we need to be touched in order to believe the truth and be saved.

Paul had a lot to give up and to be afraid of. If he turned to Christ, he would gain enemies of his former fellow Pharisees and chief priests. Surely, they would want to find him and kill him. He also had significant wealth and possessions as a Pharisee which he'd have to give up. And certainly, Christians wouldn't trust him, being that they knew him as a Pharisee seeking to kill them. As a Pharisee, Paul obeyed all the Jewish laws and traditions, but following and serving Christ is a completely different way of life that he would have to learn and adjust to. It was an extremely difficult transition for Paul.

But even with all that, Paul grabbed the bull by the horns and was a powerful Christian leader. He started so many churches, which included bringing in the Gentiles to Christ. Most of the New Testament is letters that Paul wrote to churches. Paul performed many miracles (**Scripture 6. Paul Performed Miracles - Acts 19:11-12**). The Lord used Paul in such a powerful way.

I was in my 40's when I finally turned to Jesus. I was a realist and needed proof before I believed anything. Thankfully (thank you Jesus!), the Holy Spirit touched me (so powerfully, I could not deny it) when I was at my lowest point of my life. The Lord was patient and waited for the perfect time and place, touching me the exact way I needed.

If you haven't yet made that step to make Christ your lord, what's stopping you? Is there something you don't want to give up? Are you concerned about persecution? Do you just feel you don't need a lord? Do you think you're a good person and that is enough? Do you just not believe all this Jesus stuff? It sure looks like the Apostle Paul had good reason to consider all these things. But thank God, he still chose Jesus and made a big difference in the world. Why don't you choose Jesus today!

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Scripture 1. Paul as a Pharisee

Philippians 3: 3-7 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

Scripture 2. Pharisees Loved Money

Luke 16:14-15 The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight."

Scripture 3. Paul's Mission

Acts 9:1-2 Meanwhile, Saul (later called Paul) 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.

Scripture 4. Jesus Spoke of Pharisees

Matthew 23:27-28 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Matthew 23:33 "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?"

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Scripture 5. Paul Blinded

Acts 9:3-12 As he (Paul, aka Saul) 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."

Scripture 6. Paul Performed Miracles

Acts 19:11-12 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.