

## Carrying The Torch: Surrendering To The Will Of God

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### Acts 26

#### Using This Study

##### ❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

##### ❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

##### ❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.

#### Guest Speaker:

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## 1 EXAMINE His Word

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What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the passage.

### Read Acts 26

<sup>1</sup>So Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul held out his hand and began his defense:

<sup>2</sup>“Regarding all the things I have been accused of by the Jews, King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate that I am about to make my defense before you today, <sup>3</sup> because you are especially familiar with all the customs and controversial issues of the Jews. Therefore I ask you to listen to me patiently. <sup>4</sup> Now all the Jews know the way I lived from my youth, spending my life from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup> They know, because they have known me from time past, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. <sup>6</sup> And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, <sup>7</sup> a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain as they earnestly serve God night and day. Concerning this hope the Jews are accusing me, Your Majesty! <sup>8</sup> Why do you people think it is unbelievable that God raises the dead? <sup>9</sup> Of course, I myself was convinced that it was necessary to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus the Nazarene. <sup>10</sup> And that is what I did in Jerusalem: Not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons by the authority I received from the chief priests, but I also cast my vote against them when they were sentenced to death. <sup>11</sup> I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to force them to blaspheme. Because I was so furiously enraged at them, I went to persecute them even in foreign cities.

<sup>12</sup> “While doing this very thing, as I was going to Damascus with authority and complete power from the chief priests, <sup>13</sup> about noon along the road, Your Majesty, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining everywhere around me and those traveling with me. <sup>14</sup> When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? You are hurting yourself by kicking against the goads.’ <sup>15</sup> So I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord replied, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. <sup>16</sup> But get up and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this reason, to designate you in advance as a servant and witness to the things you have seen and to the things in which I will appear to you. <sup>17</sup> I will rescue you from your own people and from the

Gentiles, to whom I am sending you <sup>18</sup> to open their eyes so that they turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

<sup>19</sup> “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, <sup>20</sup> but I declared to those in Damascus first, and then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds consistent with repentance. <sup>21</sup> For this reason the Jews, after they seized me while I was in the temple courts, were trying to kill me. <sup>22</sup> I have experienced help from God to this day, and so I stand testifying to both small and great, saying nothing except what the prophets and Moses said was going to happen: <sup>23</sup> that the Christ was to suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, to proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”

<sup>24</sup> As Paul was saying these things in his defense, Festus exclaimed loudly, “You have lost your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you insane!” <sup>25</sup> But Paul replied, “I have not lost my mind, most excellent Festus, but am speaking true and rational words. <sup>26</sup> For the king knows about these things, and I am speaking freely to him, because I cannot believe that any of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner. <sup>27</sup> Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa? I know that you believe.” <sup>28</sup> Agrippa said to Paul, “In such a short time are you persuading me to become a Christian?” <sup>29</sup> Paul replied, “I pray to God that whether in a short or a long time not only you but also all those who are listening to me today could become such as I am, except for these chains.”

<sup>30</sup> So the king got up, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them, <sup>31</sup> and as they were leaving they said to one another, “This man is not doing anything deserving death or imprisonment.” <sup>32</sup> Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

## **EXPLORE His Word**

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What does God MEAN?

1. How do you understand the biblical concept of surrendering yourself to God?
2. How did Paul demonstrate his surrender to God?
3. Did God force Paul to surrender to Him?
4. In what way did Ananias demonstrate his surrender to God?
5. Why did God chose Paul?
6. Having heard that Paul was a man that was clearly against Christianity, what motivated Ananias to meet with him privately?

7. What was God's purpose in blinding Paul for this short period of time?

8. Why was Paul the only one who was made blind?

### **③ EMBRACE His Word**

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Why does this MATTER to me?

### **Summarize your thoughts on the passage:**

Write about what God wants you to KNOW, to FEEL, and to DO...

### **Sermon Notes**

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