LESSON 3

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

APRIL 18 2026

Scripture Story: Romans; Galatians
Commentary: *The Acts of the Apostles* (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 35, 36.

God's heart for you

Photo by Colleen Cahill/Model not subject of this lesson

keytext

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

(Galatians 5:1, NIV)

flashlight

"Paul pleaded with those who had once known in their lives the power of God, to return to their first love of gospel truth. With unanswerable arguments he set before them their privilege of becoming free men and women in Christ, through whose atoning grace all who make full surrender are clothed with the robe of His righteousness. He took the position that every soul who would be saved must have a genuine, personal experience in the things of God" (*The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 388).

what do you think?

What do you think—Y (yes), N (no), or M (maybe)?

____ My choices do matter to God and do impact my future.
____ No matter how hard I try, I keep falling back into my bad habits.
____ As a Christian I am responsible for my choices.
____ I know I can do what is right only with God's help.

did you know?

Paul shows that God is abundantly able to transform the hearts of Jew and Gentile alike, and to grant to every believer in Christ the blessings promised to Israel. He repeats Isaiah's declaration concerning God's people: 'Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: for He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma and been made like unto Gomorrah.'"—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 379.

INTO THE STORY

"Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too."

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. . . .

"Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. . . . You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other."

(Romans 1:28-32, NLT; Romans 5:1-11; Galatians 5:1-15, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Read the passages in the *Into the Story* section and answer the following questions:

When Paul wrote, "So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself," what do you think that meant in the ancient world? What might that mean today?

_____
_____
_____

What was the truth about God that the people traded for a lie?

_____
_____
_____

Why do people think it foolish to acknowledge God?

_____
_____
_____

Is God's justification available to all sinners? Explain.

_____
_____
_____

What can I do to experience freedom in Christ?

_____
_____
_____

Read the passage in Romans 5 and reflect on the *assurance* of your salvation.

Read the passage in Galatians 5 and reflect on the *experience* of your salvation.

punch lines

"Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies" **(1 Corinthians 6:18-20, NIV).**

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" **(Mark 16:16, NIV).**

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?" **(Romans 8:35, NIV).**

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" **(Romans 5:8, NIV).**

further insight

"At the present time [the archenemy] induces many professing Christians, under pretense of honoring Christ, to cast contempt on the moral law and to teach that its precepts may be transgressed with impunity. It is the duty of every servant of God to withstand firmly and decidedly these perverters of the faith and by the word of truth fearlessly to expose their errors."

—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles,* p. 387

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read 1 Peter 2:21.

What does it mean to you to be born again? How does the Bible passage above describe what leads to new life in Christ?

Review the statements in the *What Do You Think?* section that you have questions about. On what do you base your answers: opinion? Scripture? media? friends? Is that the best foundation for your belief? Explain.

Sunday

Read Romans 1:28.

Reflect on the verse: "Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done" (Romans 1:28, NLT).

How does the text above (Romans 1:28) shed light on Galatians 5:1, where Paul says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." What is the connection between foolishness and slavery?

Monday

Read Galatians 5:1.

Read the *Key Text* then write a modern paraphrase of it.

Tuesday

Read Mark 16:16.

Review the *Flashlight* section and reflect on these questions:

- Have you experienced the "first love of gospel truth"? If so, what was it like?
- What were the arguments that Paul used to challenge people to become free men and women in Christ?
- Are we to understand from Ellen White's statement that it is impossible to be saved without "a genuine, personal experience in the things of God"? Why or why not? What can we do to nurture that kind of experience with God?

Wednesday

Read Galatians 4:4-7.

Read the verses in *Punch Lines*. Knowing that God wants our physical body to be the temple of the Holy Spirit, why should we guard with great care the avenues to our souls?

How does sexual immorality and impurity soil the temple of the Holy Spirit and prevent us from experiencing a genuine relationship with Jesus?

Thursday

Read the following texts and then summarize what the Bible teaches about the experience of salvation.

- Jeremiah 31:34
- Ezekiel 33:11
- Mark 9:23
- John 3:3-8, 16
- Romans 5:6-10
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
- Ephesians 2:8, 9

What do you learn from these Bible passages about Christ's gift of salvation? How can you extend God's grace to everyone in your circle of interest?

Friday

Read Romans 8:25.

Suppose a friend asked you how they can have the assurance and the experience of salvation. What would you say to your friend?

How can I show unconditional acceptance to a person with a bad reputation without compromising biblical standards?

this week's reading*

The Acts of the Apostles (or *Unlikely Leaders*), chapters 35, 36.

**Unlikely Leaders* is a special adaptation of *The Acts of the Apostles,* created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net /article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.