

THE LIFE OF PAUL - Week16
From Self-Reliance to Dependence on God
10-18-2026

1. Paul's Mission Continues — Acts 17:1–15

- Paul continued sharing the gospel in Thessalonica, where many Jews, God-fearing Greeks, and prominent women believed in Jesus.
- Opposition arose when some people rejected Paul's message and stirred up trouble. Jason and other believers helped Paul and Silas escape safely.
- In Berea, the people welcomed the message and carefully examined the Scriptures to make sure what Paul taught aligned with God's Word.

Key Point: We should never accept teaching without examining Scripture for ourselves. God calls us to be people who know His Word and live by its truth. **Acts 17:11** — The Bereans received the message eagerly and examined the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul taught was true.

2. Paul Encounters a Culture of Idols — Acts 17:16–21

- When Paul arrived in Athens, he was deeply troubled by the city's many idols. He looked for opportunities to share the good news about Jesus in the synagogue and marketplace.
- Athens was known for its philosophy, ideas, and opinions. Paul engaged people where they gathered and spoke about Jesus and the resurrection.

Key Point: Like Paul, we must recognize the beliefs and values of our culture and faithfully share the truth of the gospel.

3. The Epicurean Mindset: Living for Comfort

- Epicureans believed the goal of life was peace, happiness, and freedom from physical pain. They did not believe the gods were personally involved in everyday life.
- **Modern Connection:** Our culture often teaches us to pursue personal happiness, comfort, and a life free from pain.
- Scripture teaches that our ultimate purpose is to glorify God and enjoy a relationship with Him. Following Jesus does not mean avoiding all suffering; it means trusting Him through it.

Key Point: God is not distant or impersonal. He created us, loves us, and desires a personal relationship with us.

Romans 8:18 — Our present sufferings cannot compare with the glory that will be revealed in us.

4. The Stoic Mindset: Depending on Yourself

- Stoics emphasized self-control, wisdom, perseverance, and personal strength. While these qualities can be valuable, their approach emphasized self-reliance rather than dependence on God.
- **Modern Connection:** We often hear messages such as "Be strong," "Handle it yourself," and "Don't let anyone see you struggle."
- Even prayer, Bible reading, fasting, and serving can become activities we use to feel in control rather than ways to deepen our relationship with God.

Key Point: Biblical faith is not about becoming strong enough to live without God. It is about learning to depend on Him in every circumstance. Spiritual disciplines help us grow closer to God; they do not earn His grace.

5. God's Strength Is Made Perfect in Weakness

- We can say we trust Jesus while living as though everything depends on us.
- When our marriage struggles, we are hurting, we fail, or an obstacle remains, God invites us to seek His wisdom, bring Him our pain, receive His grace, and continue trusting Him.
- We do not have to pretend to be strong or prove that we are good enough. Our strength comes from surrendering to our Savior.

Key Point: The goal of following Jesus is not to become so strong that we never need Him. It is to know Him so deeply that we depend on Him even in our weakest moments.

2 Corinthians 12:9 — "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

PERSONAL APPLICATION

- Am I depending on God or trying to manage everything in my own strength?
- When I struggle, do I bring my pain to God or hide it?
- When God does not remove an obstacle, do I continue trusting His grace?
- Are my spiritual habits helping me grow closer to God or making me feel more self-sufficient?

THIS WEEK'S TAKEAWAY: Stop asking God to make you strong enough to live without needing Him. Ask Him to teach you to trust Him when you are not strong enough to do it on your own. True strength is found in dependence on Jesus.

PRAYER & PRAISE

OCTOBER 26TH @ 6PM

Scan to learn more!

October 31st

9am-3pm



THE GATHERING



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AT 6:30AM IN THE
TERRACE

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We are collecting new toys to
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OCTOBER 4TH-NOVEMBER 1ST

DROP OFF AT THE "GO TABLE"
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Special Needs

MINISTRY



BIBLE STUDY



GAMES



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Starting October 4th!**