

Free to be Series
“Free to be Me”
Galatians 1:11-24

The history of me.

Dear brothers and sisters, I want you to understand that the gospel message I preach is not based on mere human reasoning. I received my message from no human source, and no one taught me. Instead, I received it by direct revelation from Jesus Christ.

You know what I was like when I followed the Jewish religion - how I violently persecuted God's church. I did my best to destroy it. I was far ahead of my fellow Jews in my zeal for the traditions of my ancestors.

Galatians 1:11-14 (NLT)

Paul's history was a persecutor.

Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's followers. So he went to the high priest. He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them - both men and women - back to Jerusalem in chains.

As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?"

"Who are you, lord?" Saul asked.

And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

The men with Saul stood speechless, for they heard the sound of someone's voice but saw no one! Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So his companions led him by the hand to Damascus. He remained there blind for three days and did not eat or drink.

Acts 9:1-9 (NLT)

Paul's life was changed.

But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvelous grace. Then it pleased him to reveal his Son to me so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles.
Galatians 1:15-16 (NLT)

Paul's passion was to reach the Gentiles.

Preparation to be me.

When this happened, I did not rush out to consult with any human being. Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to consult with those who were apostles before I was. Instead, I went away into Arabia, and later I returned to the city of Damascus.

Then three years later I went to Jerusalem to get to know Peter, and I stayed with him for fifteen days. The only other apostle I met at that time was James, the Lord's brother. I declare before God that what I am writing to you is not a lie.

After that visit I went north into the provinces of Syria and Cilicia.

Galatians 1:17-21 (NLT)

Paul's preparation took time.

Free to be me.

And still the churches in Christ that are in Judea didn't know me personally. All they knew was that people were saying, "The one who used to persecute us is now preaching the very faith he tried to destroy!" And they praised God because of me.

Galatians 1:22-24 (NLT)

Paul's ministry was to preach the Gospel.

SO WHAT?

And they praised God because of me.

Galatians 1:24 (NLT)

Who will praise God because of you?

What am I gifted to do?

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Romans 12:6-8 (NLT)

What Do I love to do?

For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

What do I need preparation for?

As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ.

2 Corinthians 9:13 (NLT)

Growth Group Questions

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. Tell your life story to your group. What are significant events in your life that have shaped you?
2. Have you ever felt pressured to be conformed, to be like others rather than yourself? How and when?
3. Re-read Acts 9:1-9. Paul had a dramatic experience with Jesus. How did you come to faith in Jesus? If you haven't yet, tell how your faith journey started and is continuing.
4. Re-read Romans 12:6-8. What specific gifts do you have and could use to benefit people and the kingdom of God.
5. Re-read Galatians 1:22-24. Who in your life do you hope will praise God because of you? How are you currently using your gifts, passion, and training for God?
6. What activities are you passionate about right now in your life? How could you use that to serve others and God?
7. In what way is God calling you to serve him during this season of your life? Do you need any training to serve better? Where could you get that training?