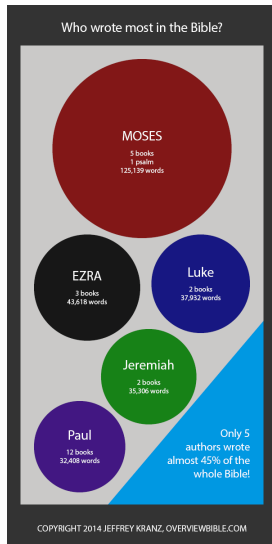


Acts Lesson 28 Handout



The Christian life really is a roller coaster.

STAGE 1 - THIS IS EASY.

In stage 1 you rarely grow up in your faith.

*Above you is a lifeless
barren mountaintop. Below
you is a fertile valley
filled with life.*

*Nothing grows on
the top of the mountain.*

*Life is found in the low
places, in bottomland,
where the soil is fertile
and deep and rich.*

And since that day, I've drawn strength from what I learned.

Though my desire is to dwell on mountain tops where things seem simple and the views are gorgeous, there's not enough on the mountaintop to sustain life.

The soil was too rocky and the air was too thin for anything to grow and thrive. It's like the disciples who wanted to build shelters and spend the night on a glorious mountain top where Jesus had just met with Moses and Elijah. I, like them, always want to stay where I won't grow.

But Jesus speaks to me today like he spoke to them back then.

We have to get off the mountain because just below there is work that needs to be done, people that need to be cared for, lessons from God that need to be learned.

Down in the valley, where the sun is warm and the air is sweet with moisture, things are alive and growing.

Now I look forward to the occasional trip up the trail to a Stoney peak, but I always yearn to get back to the bottom to be surrounded by living things and have the opportunity for me to grow along with the rest of them.

You can't grow spiritually when things go good all the time.

**Born in 5AD in Tarsus
15-20AD Studied under Gamiliel
31AD – Pharisee
32AD – Watched Stephen's stoning
33-34AD Persecuted the church
34 Conversion on Road to Damascus**



35-37 Arabia and stays 3 years.

Galatians 1:11-19

11 Dear brothers and sisters, I want you to understand that the gospel message I preach is not based on mere human reasoning.

12 I received my message from no human source, and no one taught me. Instead, I received it by direct revelation from Jesus Christ.

13 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.

14 I was far ahead of my fellow Jews in my zeal for the traditions of my ancestors.

15 But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvelous grace. Then it pleased him

16 to reveal his Son to me so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles. When this happened, I did not rush out to consult with any human being.

17 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.

18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days.

*Make sure what you
are hearing is true!*

37-38 – Returns to Damascus –

STAGE 2 - THIS IS DIFFICULT.

Acts 9:23 Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him.

Matthew 13:18–23

18 "Now listen to the explanation of the parable about the farmer planting seeds:

19 The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don't understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts.

20 The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy.

21 But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.

Acts 9:23 Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him.

24 But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him.

25 Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.

**REJECTION FROM
OTHER JESUS
FOLLOWERS.**

Acts 9:26 And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple.

27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the

road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

28 So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out.

29 And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him.

STAGE 3 - THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE.

Saul wouldn't give up. And neither should you.

Acts 9:30 When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.



31 Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY.

*All done - I give -
I can't make this
better.*

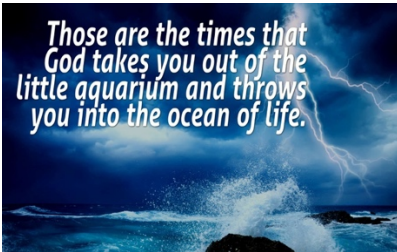
*I'm giving this
all to You.*

*I'm going to stop worrying
and stop having anxiety.*

*I'm going to trust
that You are going
to take care of me.*

Becoming prepared to work for
God requires the overhaul of one's
character: a deconstruction followed
by an untilled season then, in time,
a reconstruction.

*You have to learn
to let God do what
only He can do.*



**Sink and
drown.**

**Learn spiritual
maturity.**

*But we – like Paul
– have to go through
the Stages.*

***This is good – this is
difficult – this is impossible.***

