



PAUL ON TRIAL

Open it

1. Have you ever been falsely accused of something? What was it? How did you defend yourself?

Daily devotions

Day 1

TODAY'S THEME: EXPLORE IT

Read Acts 24:1–27

2. How would you summarize this passage?
3. What are some key ideas or themes in this passage?
4. What is God trying to teach you from this passage?
5. Write down a question you have about this passage. It can be big or small. If you don't have one, read it again and think of one.

Day 2

TODAY'S THEME: PAUL'S CHARGE

Read Acts 24:1-9

He (Tertullus) brings three charges against Paul. Although the Jewish leaders' main gripe was religious, they knew that religious charges would not get far with the Roman governor. Rome took charges of political unrest seriously, and if Paul were guilty of sedition, he could be executed. So they framed the first two charges in terms of political sedition: (1) Paul was a plague, spreading unrest among the Jews throughout the empire. (2) He was a ringleader of a heretical sect that was not recognized as a legitimate religion by the Roman government. And, (3) since he had tried to desecrate the Jewish temple by taking a Gentile beyond the Court of the Gentiles, Rome should hand him over to the Jews to execute him. Rome had granted the Jews that right, even if the Gentile in question was a Roman citizen.¹

6. What are some common strategies that people will use when trying to falsely accuse someone of something?

7. What things can you be doing today to help defend yourself if you're ever falsely accused?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✎ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

- Pray that God would bring truth to the surface. There are people around the world, and some people you may know, who are being falsely accused of something. Just pray that truth would win and God would be honored in it!

¹ Sermon by Steven Cole, "Lesson 62: A Life of Integrity" found at <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-62-life-integrity-acts-241-23> where he references (Richard Longenecker, *Expositor's Bible Commentary* [Zondervan], 9:522)

Day 3

TODAY'S THEME: PAUL'S DEFENSE—INTEGRITY

Read Acts 24:10–13

Paul's defense began with his character. He let his actions speak for themselves. He didn't have to make any excuses for why he did any of the things he was accused of at all! Instead he just had to share that there was no evidence in their accusations at all.

I want you to think of integrity as consistency. Consistency between what you say and how you live. Consistency in how you act at home with how you act at school. Consistency with how you act at school with how you act at church. Consistency between how you act around your family and friends and when you're by yourself. And so forth. The beauty of integrity is that it acts as a great defense against false accusations, because as long as you are walking with God and doing that with integrity in every part of your life, you have nothing to be ashamed of! You can open up your life like a book and say to people, "Search my life. I have nothing to hide!"

8. What areas of your life need some attention so that you can live with true integrity?

9. How might living with integrity bring you peace and confidence?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✎ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here are some things you could pray for today:

- Pray that God would help you grow in your integrity by helping you live a consistent life across the board.
- Ask that God would help you identify areas of your life that are not in step with how He would want you to be living.

Day 4

TODAY'S THEME: KNOW WHAT YOU BELIEVE

Read Acts 24:14–21

As Paul works his way through his accusations and gives defense for himself, he pivots from his integrity to his faith. Without getting into all the details, Paul addresses clearly the areas that are brought against him by the Jewish leaders—his adherence to the Old Testament Law and his teaching of the resurrection. He doesn't cower away from the opportunity he has here to be bold and declare to the court what it is that he believes. He has been brought on trial due to his faith and his teachings about Jesus. Yet in all his teachings he has confidence that he has done nothing wrong and can still live with good conscience before God and man.

10. Why are we sometimes so quick to abandon our faith and beliefs instead of standing firmly on them?

11. How confident are you in your faith on a scale of 1–10, with 1 being not confident at all and 10 being totally confident? Why would you give that number? What things are influencing your confidence or lack thereof?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✎ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

- That you would continue to grow in your faith and knowledge of God

Day 5

TODAY'S THEME: IN GOD'S TIMING

Read Acts 24:22–27

It sure seems like Felix didn't really know what to do with Paul! On the one hand, he understood where Paul was coming from. Felix was aware of this new movement called "The Way" and knew some of their teachings, so he was able to put off the Jews and dismiss their case a little bit. But the problem is that he also didn't want to tick off the Jews, so to compromise he just left Paul in prison and decided to wait until Lysias, the tribune, showed up to try him further. What happened next is that Paul waited in prison for over two years until Felix was replaced by Porcius Festus.

Two years! Think about that for a second. We don't like to wait a few minutes for something, let alone two whole years. In my Bible, verse 27 takes up three lines. We have two years packed into three lines of writing. What happens is we kind of skip over the two year part because to us it looks like things happen back to back in how they are written. Now remember, God told Paul that he was going to witness in Rome as he had in Jerusalem. But it's taking some serious time to get there! God's got perfect timing. Don't ever forget that! I'm reminded of 2 Peter 3:8, where Peter tells his readers, "But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." We may feel like we are waiting for an eternity for God to do something when in reality things are moving along at just the right pace.

12. Have you had to wait on God's timing for something?

Was it worth the wait in the end? How did waiting cause you to grow as a person?

I HAVE A QUESTION! ✎ Write it down so you can ask your leader or your parents!

PRAYER GUIDE ➤ Here is something you could pray for today:

- Patience to wait for God's timing.