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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1734 ~ Barnabas and Saul Chosen.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Have you ever sensed that God is calling you to do something for Him? And straight away, you counted the cost of the extra work and troubles you might face in taking on new circumstances? As a result, you were less than enthusiastic about doing the job for His glory. Some of the great Christian leaders of history were very slow at starting out in the work they were called to do but they finished brilliantly!

When God chooses a believer in Christ to do a certain job for Him, He waits and encourages the person to show a willingness to do the work. For some, this willingness is like a river cutting a new riverbed through a new country. But for others, they show reluctance and may even decline the divine appointment. Moses was one person who tried to say "No" to God's calling on his life. But after spending 80 years preparing Moses for his unique job, God wasn't going to let Moses decline on the basis of his own weaknesses.

Moses declared that he couldn't speak well and possibly had a stutter or speech problem. If believers set aside God's ability to help them and empower them through His grace, they're focusing on their own inabilities and not depending on God. When God calls the disciple of Christ to new fields of service, He equips them for their new work. In Philippians, Chapter 4, the Apostle Paul says: "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

You may be asking: "Can God use me in His work?" This story shows how God overcame a person's lack of training to do a great work for Him. A man named Rodney Smith was born in a gipsy tent in 1860; his mother died when he was very young. His father, named Cornelius Smith, was imprisoned for not paying his debts but while there, he heard the Gospel. When released, Cornelius took his children to a mission service and during the meeting, was converted. Cornelius shouted out in the middle of the service: "I am converted! Children, God has made a new man of me!" Poor little Rodney was so terrified he ran out of the church!

But at age 16 in another church meeting, Rodney also became a believer in Christ. He heard someone nearby whisper, "Oh, it's only a gipsy boy." But Rodney was undeterred. He got himself a Bible, taught himself to read and began preaching. His efforts came to the attention of General William Booth of the Salvation Army. In 1877, the General gave Rodney an opportunity to speak at a large meeting.

Rodney was very nervous and shaking badly by the time he reached the platform. Mr Booth suggested that he might sing a solo and so he did. After the solo, Rodney coughed nervously and said, "I am only a gipsy boy, I do not know what you know about many things, but I know Jesus. I know that He has saved me. I cannot read as you do; I do not live in a house as you do, I live in a tent. But I have a great house up yonder and some day, I am going to live in it. My great desire is to live for Christ."

Thus began 70 years of remarkable, world-renowned evangelistic work for Rodney Smith. Audiences never tired of hearing him or Gipsy Smith as he was known, tell his story of God's enabling power. In today's *Bible Adventure*, God called Barnabas and Saul to extend their ministry further afield from Antioch and into other cities and countries.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

There were five leaders in the Antioch church; apart from Barnabas and Saul, there was Simeon called Niger (who some thought may have been the man who carried Jesus' cross) and Lucius of Cyrene. Cyrene was a Mediterranean Sea coastal town in North Africa at that time. The fifth leader was named Manaen and he was raised in the same household as Herod Antipas, the son of King Herod the Great.

Antipas ruled during most of Jesus' lifetime and was responsible for the death of John the Baptist. He was also the Herod who cross-examined and mocked Jesus after His arrest. Herod Antipas ended up falling out of favour with the Emperor in Rome and was banished to Gaul in France. He died there, as a nobody. Manaen and Herod Antipas were brought up together but they turned out to be so different from each other.

Herod Agrippa the 1st was the Herod who killed James and tried to kill Peter as recorded in Acts, Chapter 12. Agrippa the 1st died in Caesarea after accepting the people's worship of him as a god.

As the five leaders of the Antioch church were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke to them: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." God had already appointed Barnabas and Saul to preach among the Gentiles. Now the time had come for them to begin preaching the Gospel of Christ's good news of salvation to other cities as well.

Obedience to God required a readiness to do His plan and that means a willingness to change. When our circumstances change, we need to change too. We aren't exactly the same people we were last week, and we won't be the same next week either. With each day, we grow in faith, knowledge and experience.

The three remaining leaders laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them on their way. The laying on of hands was a sign of Barnabas' and Saul's appointment as missionaries of the church, and also a sign of the fellowship and support given by the congregation. When the two men returned from their first missionary journey, they gave the church a full report of all they'd done. This reporting became a common pattern for the sending out missionaries ever since.

Why did God change the direction of these men's ministry? Had they done something wrong? There's a difference between pruning and discipline. Discipline results when we do something wrong but pruning occurs when we're doing something right. When we grow dull or unfruitful due to sin, God disciplines us so that we may again bear fruit.

Barnabas and Saul experienced God's pruning as He sent them out to minister in the field of great hardships. God prunes the vines of our lives to allow us to be even more fruitful and productive. He brings change into our lives so that we'll depend on Him.

Barnabas and Saul went to Seleucia, the seaport of Antioch and sailed to the north-eastern city of Salamis on the island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea. They preached the Gospel in the synagogues of the Jews. John Mark was with them to help in the work. They travelled through the island to the city of Paphos at the southern end. The chief governing official of the island lived in this city and was considered an intelligent man.

There Barnabas and Saul met a sorcerer named Elymas. As well as being a false Jewish prophet, Elymas was also a friend to the Roman governor. He immediately opposed Barnabas and Saul's presence. He knew that he would lose his job as a sorcerer if the governor believed the men's preaching about Jesus Christ. When self-interest is put first, truth is replaced by a lot of half-truths and lies. However, Elymus stayed on to listen to what Saul had to say to the governor.

Sorcery is concerned with the use of evil spirits to perform miracles. Jesus said in Matthew, Chapter 24: " For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect." Elymus had inside information that he hadn't been told by any human being. And Saul would have sensed that Elymus was possessed by evil spirits.

Christians are taught not to dabble in any type of underworld contact or activities with spirits in the Scriptures, even though some groups use Bible verses that are taken out of context. As Saul quoted in 2 Corinthians, Chapter 11, Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. It's not surprising, then, that his servants or demons will also pretend to be servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

But God's angels or Holy Spirit will never give anyone a message that is contrary to the teachings of the Bible. Just as Eve was deceived by the snake's cunning, our minds too may somehow be led astray from our sincere and pure devotion to Christ. In this age of computers and internet, there are many dangers of playing games that are against the way Christ wants us to treat other people. If Christ's compassion for other people is changed into disregard for their feelings or violent aggression, our lives are being deceptively changed from God's way to Satan's ways.

Satan is a schemer who uses all sorts of tricks to lure people into sin. There are four universal sins: pride, greed, anger and fear. If any of the computer games advance these sins in a believer's life, the believer is numbed in their conscience and over time, is in considerable danger of turning away from their loyalty and commitment to Christ. No one is immune from Satan's temptations. So we all need to be on our guard.

In Ephesians, Chapter 6, verses 11 to 13, it says: "Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles or schemes of the devil; for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of the age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

All Christians are in a spiritual warfare. We are to watch and pray to be victorious over the temptations that come to us. Fervent prayer must also be offered for all other believers in Christ so that the work of Christ will move forward and not retreat. Let's pray for one another today.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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