

## *Devotion from the past ... 2004*

Read [Galatians 1:11–24](#)

### **About Your Past . . .**

Many who now are professional church workers—teachers, DCEs, administrators, even (especially?!) pastors—have a tarnished past. Old acquaintances who now see us involved in religious education might be justified in saying, “He is a WHAT?” or “SHE’s teaching little kids?” Wonderment and awe would be okay, but the phrases usually ooze sarcasm, skepticism, or downright dumbfounded disbelief.

Take a moment now to reminisce. What is it from your school days that might make the first paragraph true for you?

Time for reminiscing is up. (Did your recollections make you smile or wince?)

Be glad you weren’t Paul. Today’s Bible reading finds Paul talking about who he was compared to who he is—and how he got that way. While few reading this have a reputation similar to Paul’s, we really do share much of his story, perhaps even in ways we might want to forget.

Once upon a time—and this is no fairytale—we were God’s enemies. Even as newborn infants, our unbelief was as terminal as Paul’s disbelief. Then the Holy Spirit changed our lives. We became believers. We knew what Jesus did for us, and we know Him as our personal Savior. And we all lived happily ever after.

Living happily every after won’t be a fairytale either. It will happen. For now, however, we still struggle with occasional lapses in faith and persistent failures in obeying God’s will. We continue to give cause for wondering how we got to be what we are when we are sometimes the way we wouldn’t want to be. If you think you’ve advanced beyond sully your reputation, just take a drive at rush hour in a large city. Hmm. What was that you said? That taxi driver is a WHAT?

We are what we are because God made us that way. The Holy Spirit delivered faith and then nudged or pushed or dragged us into serving God through educational ministry.

We serve God despite our sinfulness. That’s possible only because Jesus has already taken away our sins. We, like Paul, have learned about and appropriated God’s love through the work of Jesus Christ. As Paul’s instruction came through the Word, our instruction comes through the Word and His very words in Scripture.

No matter what our past, it’s passed. Our present and our future, sometimes

tense and often imperfect, will remain gifts of God—to us and to those we serve. Our imperfection only magnifies God's perfection. Only His grace enables us to stand with confidence and boldness before those we teach, fully capable of proclaiming the Gospel.

Confident? Bold? Capable? Yes! What we proclaim isn't hearsay or some trendy spiritualism. Our teacher was Paul's teacher. Our instructional information is a later edition of Paul's Resource. Students can trust us to tell them the truth. Even if their parents knew us a few years ago!

**Prayer Point:** Think about which students are least likely to become church workers. (And repent for thinking that way!) Ask the Holy Spirit to hold professional church work before them as an exciting potential.

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*To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Phil. 4:20)*