

Scripture and Background Information for June 2-8

The Secret to Soaring

To prepare for discussion each week, group members should use the **Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page. You will notice that we are continuing the pattern of your discussing scripture *after* the Sunday message on that passage.

Background for Acts 9:26-28

When an eagle flies, a powerful, unseen force makes the soaring possible. We see the same thing in our stories, and in the Scriptures: behind people of greatness are often powerful influences who provide life to their life. In this series we'll look at practical ways to unleash the best in yourself by discovering, developing, and deploying the best in others. In Acts 9, Paul's best is unleashed based on the testimony of a friend, Barnabas.

Paul was not always the leader of the Christians that we think of now. In fact, before he was Paul, his name was Saul. Acts 9 is the first time that we meet him in scripture. In Acts 9, he was leaving Jerusalem for Damascus to persecute Christians. A Jew of Jews, Saul was on mission to punish Jews who had recently converted to Christianity. However, Jesus encountered him on his way to Damascus. Confronted with Christ and discipled by the Christians in Damascus he was planning on persecuting, Paul becomes a Christian and begins serving Christ.

In Acts 9:26-28, Paul (still called Saul) is attempting to join the Christians in Jerusalem. However, they were naturally skeptical since the last time they saw Paul, he was persecuting Christians in Jerusalem. And now he wants to join them? However, Barnabas, who had spent time with Paul, vouched for Paul. Barnabas' gamble to approve Paul to the Christians in Jerusalem certainly worked out well. It also paved the way for a life-long ministry and friendship together. Barnabas' uncertainty is a great reminder that even our best friends were once strangers, and that God can write a beautiful story with those who were at one time complete opposites.

**In Acts 15:36-41, Paul and Barnabas separated due to a disagreement over Mark. Paul did not want Mark to join them on their next missionary journey because Mark had not worked hard enough on their last one according to Paul. Barnabas thought that Mark could use another chance and went with him. Barnabas was committed to Mark in the same way he had been committed to Paul.

Scriptures for the upcoming weeks:

June 9	Job 11:2-6
June 16	Job 8:5-7
June 23	Job 27:1-6
June 30	Job 38:1-4