



Paul
TENACITY



TENACITY DEFINED

1. Gripping something firmly
2. Being very determined
3. Continuing to exist
4. Persistence



KEY VERSE

I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course.

Acts 20:24

Paul

Tenacity



LIFE SUMMARY

Prior to meeting Jesus, the apostle Paul was a devout Jew who zealously opposed the message of the cross and the work of the early church. Paul was transformed when he encountered Jesus and the course of his life changed completely. God chose Paul to carry the good news about Christ to the known world. As Paul fulfilled his calling, he faced countless difficulties and dangers. We chose to highlight the life of Paul in this unit because he remained tenacious in his commitment to Christ in the face of great challenges. The apostle Paul spent his entire life devoted to the work of God, setting a compelling example of the kind of tenacity that we would need to complete the work that God has given each of us in our lives.

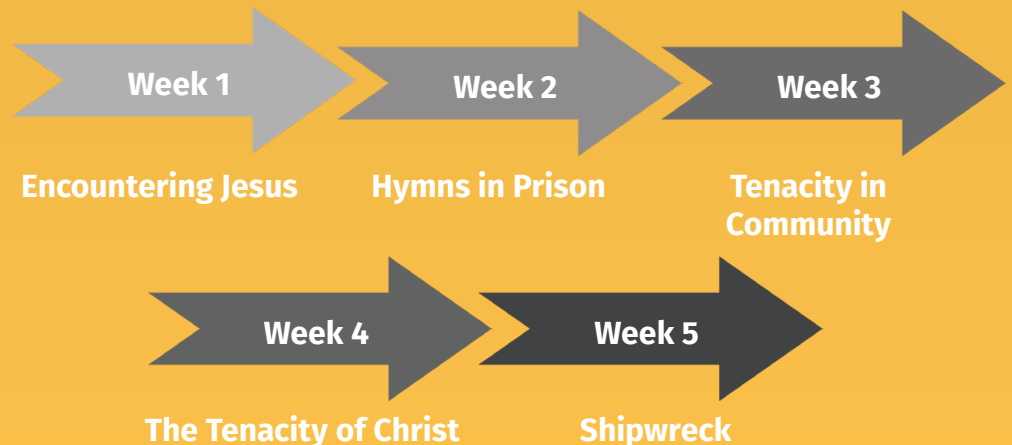


CHARACTER QUALITY

The call to spread the gospel throughout the known world and establish the church in the first century required the leadership of someone with grit, determination, and perseverance. We can look back on Paul's life and see how perfectly suited he was for this task. His commitment to Christ came at great personal cost and was marked by tenacity. The Lord said: "He is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name" (Acts 9:15-16).



UNIT OVERVIEW



Hudson Taylor

Tenacity



LIFE SUMMARY

As a young man, Hudson Taylor asked God to give him a mission. The Lord responded by calling him to serve in China. Although illness and setbacks forced him back to England, Hudson Taylor held tightly to the Lord and used the time recovering from illness to pray for the future work to be done in China. Through this time of prayer, Taylor gained a vision for the next steps involved in his mission. He went on to found the China Inland Mission, an organization that would recruit more missionaries in order to reach the interior of China. These reinforcements would face more trials, but would eventually grow the mission into something much greater than anything that Taylor could have imagined.



TENACITY IN THE LIFE OF TAYLOR

Hudson Taylor was willing to give everything to share the gospel. He endured sickness and adversity, but he did not allow the trials he faced to diminish his efforts to reach the lost. Both Paul and Hudson Taylor poured out their lives as offerings to the Lord. Hudson Taylor's example of tenacity had a lasting influence on missions worldwide.



UNIT OVERVIEW



NOTABLE QUOTE

"All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them."



SERVED IN

China & Thailand
1832 - 1905



Paul

TENACITY



KEY CONCEPT

Knowing Jesus allows us to live tenacious lives for his kingdom.



SCRIPTURE

- » **Acts 9:1-22** – Paul’s conversion
- » **Acts 9:5** – Jesus appeared to Paul
- » **Galatians 1:11-24** – Paul recounts his conversion
- » **Acts 26:9-29** – Paul’s testimony to Agrippa
- » **1 Timothy 1:12-17** – God’s grace to Paul



Background to Today's Lesson

The apostle Paul, formerly known as Saul, was arguably the most drastic and startling example of conversion in his day. Until Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, Paul not only refused to accept the message of the gospel, he zealously opposed it. Although many lives had already been transformed by the power of Jesus’ resurrection, Paul experienced the resurrected Christ in a unique and deeply personal way. This encounter with Jesus changed his life forever.



Today's Lesson

This week we want to begin with the story of Paul’s conversion. Prior to his encounter with Jesus, Paul was a well known Jew who worked hard to stop the spread of Christianity. However, on the road to Damascus, Paul had a dramatic encounter with Jesus and his life changed forever. While Paul saw himself as the “chief of sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15), he also recognized that God “had set [him] apart before [he] was born,” and “called [him] by his grace” (Galatians 1:15). His encounter with Jesus on the road that day transformed the rest of his life completely. His experience of Jesus’ grace and forgiveness motivated Paul for a lifetime of devotion to God and fruitful ministry.



Programming Notes

As we discuss Paul’s conversion, help the kids understand how Paul’s life completely changed direction after meeting Jesus. Define tenacity and look at Paul’s story through that lens. Pre-conversion Paul tenaciously sought to further the Jewish faith and destroy Christianity. He took extreme measures to hunt down, imprison, and even kill Jesus’ followers. The power of his conversion can be seen in the complete change in Paul’s trajectory. The man once persecuting Christians began “preaching the faith he once tried to destroy” (Galatians 1:23). Paul’s transformation was so profound that he tenaciously continued furthering Jesus’ kingdom for the rest of his life.

Focus on the story of Paul’s conversion in Acts 9:1-22. Lay the groundwork for the rest of this unit by helping the kids see how Paul tenaciously opposed the gospel before coming to Christ, but after meeting Jesus, he began to tenaciously spread the gospel.



Early Life & Conversion

Before Hudson Taylor was born, his father's heart was deeply impacted by the spiritual state of China. He prayed that if God were to give him a son, that he would be called to mission work in China. As Taylor grew up, he tried to make himself a Christian, but his heart felt unchanged and he began to believe he could not be saved. He thought it best to take his fill of the world since there was no hope for him beyond the grave. This attitude changed one afternoon when Taylor picked up a gospel tract in his father's library and began reading. At the same time, Taylor's mother, who was about 80 miles away, felt an intense yearning for the conversion of her son and went to her room to pray, determined not to stop until God answered her. Hours later, when she finished praying, she was convinced that her son had become a Christian. The Lord had answered and Hudson Taylor completely surrendered his life to the Lord's work.



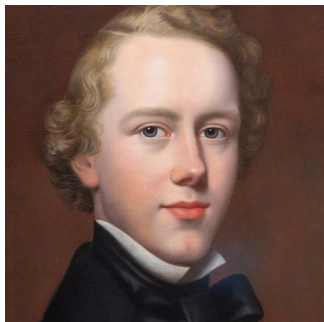
For the Workers

Chapter 1 of "A Retrospect" describes Hudson Taylor's conversion. Consider your own conversion and how God changed your life. Look for opportunities to share your story with others.



Resources in Action

Use the resources to help the kids understand Hudson Taylor's journey to Christ. Many of the kids are growing up in Christian homes. Encourage them to consider the ways that their story is similar to Hudson Taylor's. Read through some of the gospel tracts and talk about the way that Hudson Taylor had a personal experience with Jesus that changed his life forever.



Hudson
Taylor

TENACITY



KEY CONNECTION

Like Paul, Hudson Taylor's life trajectory was altered immensely after he encountered Jesus and received the call to go to China.



RESOURCES

- [A Retrospect \(pg. 2-4\)](#)
- [Brief Overview of His Life](#)
- [Taylor's Childhood Book](#)
- [Tract for Kids](#)
- [Burmese Tract](#)



Paul

TENACITY



KEY CONCEPT

Worship and prayer strengthen our tenacity in difficult situations.



SCRIPTURE

- » **Acts 16:16-34** – Paul and Silas in prison
- » **1 Thessalonians 2:1-12** – Paul is mistreated in Philippi
- » **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** – “Rejoice always...”
- » **Romans 8:28** – God works for our good
- » **Philippians 4:10-13** – Paul learned contentment



Background to Today's Lesson

Right after Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, he began preaching the gospel with passion and conviction. Last week we saw how Paul's zeal against the church of Christ was completely redirected after he had a personal encounter with Jesus. Immediately after his conversion, Paul began preaching with a tenacity that would grow throughout his ministry. He experienced persecution as he traveled, but he continued to build up the church as he preached.



Today's Lesson

This week we'll look at how prayer and worship can strengthen our tenacity. Paul and Silas were detained, beaten, and locked in a prison in Philippi because of opposition to their preaching about Jesus. While in prison, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns. As they worshipped God, a great earthquake shook the prison and the doors were opened. In a panic, the jailer drew his sword to kill himself, but Paul called out to him and told him that all of the prisoners were still there. The jailer was humbled, and Paul took the opportunity to lead him to faith. Through prayer and worship Paul was made ready to share the gospel, and as a result a jailer and his whole family came to faith in Christ!



Programming Notes

This week's lesson is a great opportunity to teach about the way that prayer and worship can strengthen our tenacity through difficult situations. Although we tend to think of tenacity as simply being able to endure hardship, we see in this text that Paul and Silas thrived in the midst of their imprisonment. Prayer and worship strengthened their ability to continue doing God's work because they were reminded of how awesome God is. After God opened the prison doors, it was natural for them to press in to share the gospel with their jailer because their minds had already been fixed on God and his plans.

For the younger kids, help them to imagine what it was like for Paul and Silas. Show them through the text that when we pray and worship we become stronger spiritually. This allows us to face hard situations and to react in a way that is pleasing to God.



Training and Early Ministry

Once a believer, Hudson Taylor immersed himself in God's word and in prayer. One day, as he prayed and surrendered his plans to God, he received his call. God spoke "China" into his heart. This clarity in prayer strengthened his resolve and he began training for a life abroad. This included evangelism, medical training, exercise, and language study. Once in China, Taylor faced many of the anticipated discomforts. However, through his training he had learned what it meant to trust God in prayer and to worship the One who gives and provides for his children. The tenacity that had been built at home gave him the boldness to share the gospel in new ways abroad. Taylor experimented with a new evangelistic technique: he began dressing like the people he was ministering to. Although other missionaries ridiculed this decision, Hudson Taylor determined to do whatever it took to reach the Chinese with the gospel.



For the Workers

Hudson Taylor went to great lengths to prepare his heart and mind for the stresses of foreign ministry, and God blessed and strengthened him because of it. Read "*Hudson Taylor: Deep in the Heart of China*" and reflect on your willingness to prepare yourself for the challenges that come with sharing the gospel.



Resources in Action

Encourage the kids to think about the challenges of sharing the gospel and what we can learn from Hudson Taylor's preparation and example. Use the Chinese clothing resources to demonstrate one bold step Hudson Taylor took to try to further the spread of the gospel. Encourage them to consider how prepared they are to let go of their identity and share the gospel with joy.



Hudson Taylor
TENACITY



KEY CONNECTION

Hudson Taylor, like Paul, was strengthened by prayer and worship during his time in England and later as he transitioned to living in China.



RESOURCES

[Deep in the Heart of China](#)
(Ch. 5)

[Deep in the Heart of China](#)
(Ch. 10)

[Qing Dynasty Clothing](#)
[Chinese Shoes](#)



Paul TENACITY



KEY CONCEPT

The body of Christ strengthens our tenacity to do what God has called us to.



SCRIPTURE

- » **Philemon 10-14** – Paul tells of his relationship with Onesimus
- » **Philemon 4-7** – Paul thanks Philemon for his ministry
- » **Philemon 17-22** – Paul requests that Philemon bless and embrace Onesimus
- » **Ephesians 4:11-16** – The body should build each other up in love



Background to Today's Lesson

We have been learning about Paul's tenacity in the face of great trials. Paul's life changed drastically when he met Jesus. Not only did Paul love Jesus, he also loved the Body of Christ. Paul spent his life carrying out Jesus' mission to build the church (Matthew 16:18). The books of the Bible written by Paul give us a glimpse into the relationship that Paul had with the church. He called the believers onward and also asked for their support physically and spiritually.



Today's Lesson

Today we will look at the book of Philemon to better understand the relationship that Paul had with a man named Onesimus. Onesimus was a slave who had run away from his owners in Colossae. He came to Paul while he was in prison and was converted. Paul and Onesimus grew so close that Paul referred to him as his own child. After his conversion, Onesimus' faithfully served Paul while he was in prison. Though Paul had received the support of the Colossian church through Onesimus' service, he felt that he should send Onesimus back to his owner, Philemon. Paul wrote a letter to Philemon, thanking him for the unintended gift of Onesimus, and requesting continued support through prayer.



Programming Notes

The lesson this week is focused on the way that other believers can reinforce our tenacity. While Paul was in prison it would have been easy for him to feel isolated and unable to do the work of God. However, after Onesimus' conversion, Scripture says that he served and strengthened Paul during his imprisonment for the gospel. Paul received this blessing as one from the church in Colossae. The letter to Philemon reveals not only Paul's instruction to this slave owner, but also his need for support from the church. Specifically he asks for them to accept Onesimus back as a brother in Christ, and also to pray for Paul to be released. Paul's tenacity is reinforced by the growth of the church and by the faithful love and support of believers.

For the younger kids, help them to see how Paul needed others in his life, just as we need others in our lives. Help them see that we can help one another stay strong in our faith.



Founding the Ministry

As the demands of the work in China grew, Taylor's health began to fail, forcing him back to England in 1860. As he recovered, he reflected on the needs of the people of China and his own insufficiency for the task at hand. In an attempt to stir the hearts of Christians in England, Taylor wrote a pamphlet entitled, "China: Its Spiritual Needs and Claims." The document had its intended effect and believers from many churches joined Hudson Taylor in attempting to reach all 11 of the inland provinces of China. The body of Christ strengthened Taylor's tenacity to continue on in the work, and supplied the hands and feet to actually take the gospel throughout the land. Taylor trained up these missionaries in his evangelistic methods. These believers, like Taylor, adopted the dress and customs of the Chinese and were completely dependent on God for their finances. The first group of 16 missionaries headed to China in 1865 and the China Inland Mission was formed.



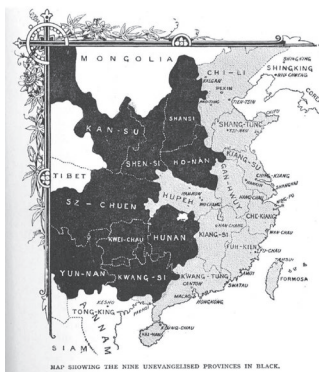
For the Workers

Read Hudson Taylor's pamphlet "China: Its Spiritual Needs and Claims." God created the church so that we can give and receive from one another. Reflect on how you have received from the body to further the ministry God has called you to.



Resources in Action

Use the resources to bring Hudson Taylor's plan for reaching inland China to life. Hudson Taylor called believers in England to help him minister to the Chinese people. Use the maps, the cultural and the historical documents to better understand the demographics of the Chinese people in his day.



Hudson Taylor

TENACITY



KEY CONNECTION

Both Paul and Hudson Taylor understood the importance of giving to and receiving from the body of Christ in order to carry on the work of sharing the gospel.



RESOURCES

[Hudson Taylor Choice Sayings](#)

[Unreached in China in 1865](#)

[CIM: Website & Video](#)

[Foundations of the CIM](#)

[Art, Religion, and Culture](#)



Paul TENACITY



KEY CONCEPT

Jesus' perfect tenacity is seen in his unwavering commitment to the Father.



SCRIPTURE

- » **Luke 9:51, 57-62** – Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem
- » **Isaiah 50:5-8** – “I have set my face like a flint...”
- » **Luke 9: 22;43-44** – Jesus foretelling his death
- » **Matthew 14:22-23** – Jesus prioritizes the Secret Place to process the loss of John the Baptist
- » **John 6:38-40** – Jesus has come to do the will of His Father



Background to Today's Lesson

Throughout this unit we have focused on how Paul's tenacity changed and grew over the course of his life. Paul's encounter with Christ completely transformed him and fueled a lifetime of faithful service building the kingdom of God. Although Paul faced countless challenges along the way, his tenacity grew over time as he prayed and worshipped God and built up the church of Christ. Paul was enabled to do this work with such tenacity because of Jesus, who had gone before him as the perfect example.



Today's Lesson

Over the last few weeks we have looked at the tenacity of Paul, but today we will look at the perfect tenacity of Christ as he relentlessly pursued the work that the Father sent him to do. Jesus made it clear that he came down from heaven not to do his own will, but the will of the Father (John 6:38). On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus foretold his death twice. He was aware that rejection and suffering were coming soon, and yet he was determined to continue on toward Jerusalem. Jesus revealed his aim to glorify God as he encouraged his followers to deny themselves and lose their lives for the purposes of God. Many did not understand or support Jesus, but he “fixed his face like a flint” toward Jerusalem where his work on the cross would be completed.



Programming Notes

This week we want the kids to see the tenacity of Christ as He persevered in the face of great difficulty. Although Jesus' ministry on earth was very demanding, He was empowered as he walked with God on the deepest and most personal level. We want to help the kids see Christ's tenacity in his focus and determination to finish the work of salvation. Focus your teaching on Luke 9, looking first at Christ's example (v51) and then at our need for tenacity as we follow him (v 23-26).

For the younger kids, help them to see that Jesus was fully committed to doing the Father's will and nothing could change his mind. Jesus faced hard things, but he stayed focused on the work that God had given him to do and he obeyed all the way to the cross.



Challenges to Ministry

On one missionary trip, Hudson Taylor traveled to Tung-Chow, a region known as “Satan’s Seat” because of its lawless people. Taylor was working with a man named John Burdon at the time. When they arrived in the city, all seemed to be going well as they handed out Bibles. Suddenly a huge man began to accuse them. He grabbed Taylor by the throat to choke him. People chanted, “kill the foreign devils.” As they were dragged away, Taylor and Burdon continued to throw tracts to the people. Taylor reminded his friend how the first disciples rejoiced when they were counted worthy to suffer for the cause of Christ. They were taken before the Mandarin (the mayor) of the city where they had additional opportunities to share the gospel. By God’s grace, they found favor with the Mandarin and were allowed to share their Bibles throughout the whole city.



For the Workers

Read the “Tung Chow Missionary” account, Hudson Taylor’s personal recollection of one particular evangelistic trip that brought both great challenges and joy. Are you willing to enter into this work like Paul, Hudson Taylor, and John Burdon? What type of situations cause you to waver?



Resources in Action

China was not a welcoming place for foreigners in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. Conflicts like the Boxer Rebellion and the Opium War made it difficult to reach the nation, but Hudson Taylor and his missionaries were not dissuaded. Use the resources to teach the kids about some of these challenges to Hudson Taylor’s evangelistic work.



Hudson Taylor

TENACITY



KEY CONNECTION

Hudson Taylor had learned through Jesus’ example that suffering was a normal part of sharing the gospel and that tenacity was needed in order for the work to continue.



RESOURCES

[Tung Chow Missionary Trip](#)

[Boxer Rebellion Summary and photos](#)

[Boxer Rebellion](#)

[Chinese Wheelbarrow](#)



Paul TENACITY



KEY CONCEPT

True tenacity perseveres to the very end.



SCRIPTURE

- » **Acts 27:1-28:10** – shipwreck on Malta
- » **2 Corinthians 11:21-33** – Paul's shipwreck and sufferings
- » **Romans 1:13-15** – Paul's desire to preach in Rome
- » **Acts 20:22-25,36-38** – Paul's journey to Jerusalem
- » **2 Timothy 3:12** – The godly will be persecuted



Background to Today's Lesson

Throughout this unit we have highlighted Paul's tenacity as he carried out the work of God. Last week we saw these same characteristics in the life of Christ. Paul's encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6) completely changed his life and motivated him to preach the gospel throughout the known world. Although he endured insults, beatings, and imprisonment, Paul considered it an honor to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:29).



Today's Lesson

Today's lesson is built around the shipwreck on Malta near the end of Paul's life. While visiting Jerusalem, the Jews arrested Paul and tried to kill him. Because Paul was a Roman citizen, he appealed his case to Caesar, the highest power in the land, and was put on a ship to Rome. On this journey, his ship was battered by a violent storm and ultimately wrecked on the island of Malta. We saw last week that Jesus "set his face like a flint" to go to Jerusalem where he would be crucified (Isaiah 50:7). Like Jesus, Paul knew that imprisonment, affliction, and death awaited him as he worked to share the gospel, but he was resolved to go where the Spirit led him (Acts 20).



Programming Notes

Again this week, we see Paul making the most of an extremely difficult situation. Aboard a ship in the midst of a terrible storm, Paul tenaciously persevered, seeking to encourage and feed the other 275 men on board. He openly shared with them that he was a follower of God. Once on the island of Malta, Paul healed the sick and introduced the native people to Christ. In this last week of the unit, help the kids see that Paul's life didn't get any easier as he followed Christ; it actually got harder! The key passage for this week is Acts 20:22-24. We see, through this text, that Paul believed that fulfilling the work of God was of greater value than any earthly comfort or gain.

For the younger kids, help them to see that Paul faced new and greater challenges as he followed God. Paul knew that difficulty awaited him on his journey to Rome, but he continued to tenaciously trust and follow God.



Legacy

In 1905, when Hudson Taylor was 73 years old, he made his eleventh and final trip to China. He spent Easter in Yangchow and visited a few other towns before stopping at the most difficult of the unreached provinces that his workers had encountered. His last days were spent doing what God had called him to: he visited parts of the city, inspected a site for a new hospital, and spoke to a congregation of Chinese workers. While preparing for a service the next morning, he passed away peacefully. Taylor was faithful to the very end of his life and his legacy continues to bear fruit today. When he died in 1905, the CIM had 825 missionaries living in all eighteen provinces of China and there had been 25,000 Christian converts. The organization that Taylor started is still active today. It has expanded and is now known as the Overseas Missionary Fellowship International.



For the Workers

Read *"Taylor in His Later Years"* and reflect on how Hudson Taylor spent the last few months of his life. Let it encourage you to finish the work God has put before you.



Resources in Action

Use the resources this week to drive home Hudson Taylor's tenacity. Describe the lasting impact of his life and the ministry of CIM, and help the kids envision what it would look like to finish strong in their lives.



Hudson Taylor

TENACITY



KEY CONNECTION

The apostle Paul and Hudson Taylor were men who fixed their eyes on the Lord and tenaciously resolved to finish the work entrusted to them.



RESOURCES

[Life Summary](#)

[Memorial & Family Burial Site](#)

[Taylor in His Later Years](#)

[CIM to OMF](#)

[CIM: Website & Video](#)