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Governor Felix

Saying “Wait” to God

Acts 24

Felix, the governor of Caesarea, had moved from slavery to freedom to high government power. He was married at least three times. His third wife, Drusilla, had married the king of Emesa at fifteen; Felix seduced her for himself a year later. The historian Tacitus described Felix as “a master of cruelty and lust who held the power of a tyrant with the disposition of a slave.” For a short time Felix had the opportunity to say “Yes” to God. What he said instead was “Wait.”

GROUP DISCUSSION. When do you have trouble making decisions?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Mentally review the various opportunities God has provided for you to know him. How have you used (or neglected) them?

The apostle Paul is in trouble. He has barely escaped a riot and a plot against his life. Now he is imprisoned in the hands of a pagan governor. *Read Acts 24.*

1. Note the people, places and events of this story. What would you recapture if you were presenting this as a news event?

2. What words show the effort Tertullus made to gain the favor of Felix (vv. 2-8)?

3. What charges did Tertullus bring against Paul (vv. 5-6)?

4. If you had been a lawyer for Paul's defense, how would you counter this kind of prosecution?

5. How did Paul answer the charges against him (vv. 10-21)? What did he admit, and what did he deny?

6. How did Paul's belief in the resurrection influence his life (vv. 15-16, 21)?

7. If you believed that a person who dies simply ceases to exist in both body and soul, how would you conduct your life differently?

8. What would it mean for you to keep your "conscience clear before God"?

9. What does the way Felix handled Paul's legal case tell you about his attitude toward Christianity (vv. 22-27)?

10. Verse 25 says that Felix was afraid. Why?

11. What part does fear play in your own faith or lack of faith in Jesus?

12. Paul was in the custody of Felix for two years. What opportunities did Felix have during that time?

13. What did you consider in making your own response to the Christian faith? (Or, what do you need to consider before you respond to Jesus?)

14. What is dangerous about saying “Wait” to God?

Slowly reread verses 15-16, asking God to bring to your mind appropriate prayers. Then pray as led by his Spirit.

Now or Later

Do you have a Felix or two in your life? God gave Felix a two-year opportunity to learn of Jesus, and he used the imprisoned apostle Paul as his advocate. Who listens to you—even occasionally? Be ready to represent well the name of Jesus.