

PAUL

Small Group Guide: Paul, Week 1

Key Takeaways:

1. Paul was a highly educated Jewish scholar, trained under the renowned rabbi Gamaliel.
2. He was born in Tarsus, an important city strategically and culturally.
3. Paul was a "Hebrew of Hebrews" - fully immersed in Jewish culture and education.
4. Jewish education in the first century was rigorous, focusing on memorization and interpretation of scripture.
5. Paul's background uniquely prepared him to become the apostle to the Gentiles.

Discussion Questions:

1. What surprised you most about Paul's background and education? How does this new information change your perspective on his writings?

2. The sermon mentioned that Paul had memorized most of the Old Testament. How might this deep knowledge of scripture have influenced his ministry and writings?
3. Discuss the Jewish educational system described in the sermon. How does it compare to our modern education? What can we learn from this approach to studying scripture?
4. The phrase "Hebrew of Hebrews" was explained in the sermon. What does this tell us about Paul's identity and cultural background? How might this have affected his ministry?
5. Paul was trained to answer questions with questions. How can this approach be beneficial in discussing faith and sharing the gospel?
6. The sermon touched on Paul's conversion experience. How do you think his extensive religious background influenced his dramatic change of heart?

Practical Application:

1. Scripture Memorization: Choose a short passage of scripture to memorize this week. Discuss how memorizing scripture can deepen our faith and understanding.
2. Cultural Awareness: Reflect on how your own cultural background influences your faith. How can we be more aware of cultural differences when sharing the gospel?
3. Answering with Questions: Practice answering a faith-related question with another thoughtful question. How does this change the conversation?
4. Deep Dive: Choose one of Paul's epistles to study more deeply this week, keeping in mind his background as

shared in the sermon.

5. Personal Testimony: Share briefly how you came to faith. How does your story compare to Paul's dramatic conversion?

Closing Prayer:

Encourage group members to continue reflecting on Paul's background and how it informs their reading of his epistles throughout the week.

5-Day Devotional

Day 1: God's Unchanging Love

Reading: Romans 8:31-39

Devotional: In the sermon, we're reminded that "God's love is consistent" regardless of our circumstances. This echoes Paul's powerful words in Romans 8. Reflect on times when you've felt distant from God or questioned His love. How does the assurance that nothing can separate us from God's love change your perspective on current challenges? Today, consciously embrace God's unconditional love, allowing it to transform your thoughts and actions.

Day 2: The Power of God's Word

Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Devotional: The sermon highlights Paul's extensive knowledge of Scripture, having memorized much of the Old Testament. While we may not memorize entire books, we can still prioritize God's Word in our lives. How often do

you engage with Scripture? Consider starting a habit of daily Bible reading, even if it's just a few verses. Ask God to open your eyes to His truth and to transform you through His Word.

Day 3: God's Calling and Purpose

Reading: Acts 9:1-19

Devotional: Paul's dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus shows how God can radically change a person's life and purpose. Reflect on your own journey with God. Have you experienced a "Damascus Road" moment, or has your faith journey been more gradual? Regardless of how you came to faith, God has a unique purpose for your life. Pray for clarity in discerning God's calling and for courage to follow where He leads.

Day 4: Unity in Christ

Reading: Ephesians 2:11-22

Devotional: The sermon touches on Paul's background as a "Hebrew of Hebrews" who became the apostle to the Gentiles. This illustrates God's power to break down cultural and religious barriers. Consider the divisions in our world today. How can you be an instrument of unity in your community? Ask God to help you see others as He sees them and to love across boundaries.

Day 5: Perseverance in Faith

Reading: 2 Corinthians 11:23-30

Devotional: Paul's life was marked by intense suffering for the gospel, yet he remained faithful. The sermon reminds us that God is "steadfast" even when circumstances are difficult. Reflect on challenges you're facing. How can you maintain hope and faith in the midst of trials? Remember that God's presence is constant, even when we can't feel it. Pray for strength to persevere and for eyes to see God's work in your struggles.