

Week 7: Paul

Small Group Lesson

Introduction

Paul was a hero. From the time of his salvation in Acts 9 to his imprisonment at Rome in Acts 28, we read about the most fearless Christian of all time. His “guts” came from his apostolic calling. What principles did he live his life with, and how can it improve those who are seeking to pioneer new fields and careers?

“Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest” (Acts 9:1)

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” (Acts 9:3–6)

1. WILLING TO CHANGE (Acts 9)

Paul spent his first few years as “Saul of Tarsus.” He was a Christian killer and persecutor. One day, on the road to Damascus to arrest Christians, he met Jesus face to face. He was willing to totally change 180 degrees and become the leading spokesman for the Gospel worldwide.

Great leaders can change. They recognize when they are on the wrong ship and are willing to move to what is right. If you don’t change, you will only “ride it into the ground.”

Question:

What change you have made in your life or career has required the most courage from you?

2. SECOND-EFFORT (Acts 14:9)

He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed (Acts 14:9)

Paul preached at Lystra (in Turkey), and a crippled man was healed. The crowd turned on him and stoned him, leaving him for dead outside of town. After prayer, he was raised up and went back into the city.

Most of us know you don’t repeat a fiasco! Paul, however, went back up the “hill” and tried again in that city. We cannot let a defeat define us. The head coach of the OK City Thunder said (after his huge losing

season the first year), “We are not losing games; we are learning how to win games.”

Question:

Have you ever failed on a first attempt and then succeeded on the second or third? What was it?

3. LED BY THE SPIRIT (Acts 16)

Paul ran out of places to minister in Turkey, and the Holy Spirit would not let him go eastward toward Asia. At Troas, a coastal city, he dreamed of a man in Macedonia (northern Greece) who begged him to come over and preach to them. He obeyed the Spirit, and because of that, the western world was evangelized!

It's not what we think that matters: it is what God is instructing us to do that matters. When you come to the “end” of your knowledge about something, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to your spirit in a “dream” or “vision” and show you what your next step should be.

Question:

Are you at a “dead end” in some area of your life or business right now? In what area could your group pray for you for a breakthrough?

4. STRONG IN THE STORM (Acts 27–28)

Paul was arrested in Jerusalem for the Gospel and sent to Rome to be tried by Caesar. On the way, the ship hit a two-week cyclone, and all hope of being rescued was gone. When everyone was hopeless, Paul took charge and directed the ship to an island. A deadly snake bit him on the beach, and he simply shook it off into the fire without harm!

Paul could keep up hope because he knew that it was God's purpose for him to go to Rome. You cannot collapse in the crunch. You have to lead, encourage, and go forward.

Question:

Is there something you are going through that you would call a “storm” in your family, your business, or your health? How are you doing in that storm?

Action Point:

Take a few minutes to pray for those in the group who may be walking through trials that are causing them to question their leadership. Encourage any group members who have not read Life 01 that now would be a great time to learn more about Jesus, our greatest Hero, and what He did for you.

Leader:

Take a few minutes and ask if any men need specific prayer over a need they may be facing. As you speak with the men in your group, find out what the next step is for them in the Bethany Growth Track.