

The Apostle Paul

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 1 September 1, 2024
“Blinded by the Light”



OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we believe and trust your Word. We want to grow in you more each day and to understand your promises for us. We commit our time together to you and ask that you heal and restore us as we dive into our study. We want a deeper faith. We want to meet with you and know you better. So today we say "yes" to what you want to show us through the life of the Apostle Paul. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Acts 9:1-6, 9, 17-19 (NIV)

¹ Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. ³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."... ⁹ For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

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INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul came on to the pages of history as someone who hated Christians and he became the ringleader in persecuting them. But then something happened: he encountered the resurrected Jesus and it changed everything. So what lessons can we learn from Paul's early years and his conversion for our own spiritual journey?

Like the Apostle Paul, we were created in the image of God; still, there is something broken in us and we can either give into the light or to the darkness. Paul's conversion to the light, required Ananias' willingness to love. We need to remember that even today, it's not our superior intellectual arguments that win people to Christ; it is our capacity and willingness to love. So if you are a Jesus follower, pray “Lord, help me to love others well.”

QUESTIONS

1. In the sermon, Pastor Eric said “except for Jesus, no one has had a greater impact on the Christian faith than Paul.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?
2. Did your background and training make it easy or hard for you to believe in Jesus? How well are you able to understand and relate to people with backgrounds different from yours?
3. Of what achievements, degrees, or awards - if any - are you particularly proud? Would you rank knowing Jesus above them? Why or why not?
4. What evidence or experiences have most strongly led you to share Paul's faith that Jesus is truly alive; and to order your life around that faith?
5. Read the scripture passage on page 1. Has God ever called you to do something good that nevertheless scared you and called for some courage? If God called you to an “Ananias” mission today, how easy or hard do you believe it would be for you to respond?

FINAL APPLICATION

Invitation:

- 1) If you have not said “yes” to Christ, say “yes” to him today.
- 2) If you are already a Christian, pray: “Lord, help me to love others well.”