



# THE CALLING OF PAUL

FEBRUARY STUDY GUIDE

# Paul - Formation, Fellowship, & Mission

## February Focus: Series Intro & The Calling of Paul

February kicks off our year-long exploration into the life and teaching of Paul, the Apostle. This series seeks to provide a deeper understanding of Paul's profound theological insights, personal transformation, church leadership, and missional drive. With Paul as both a guide and example of life in Christ, our desire is that the Holy Spirit might equip our family to live out our own call to fellowship, formation, and mission in Jesus' name.

This month lays the foundation for understanding Paul as both object and agent of God's reconciling work. We look at his radical conversion, early preparation, and the first steps in his apostolic mission.

## How to use this guide

Each study guide is designed to be done after listening to that week's sermon, either in person or on Spotify. You can use the guide as part of a small group or on your own.

1. Begin by getting comfortable and choosing to be present. In prayer, acknowledge the presence of Father, Son and Spirit and ask that your mind would be settled and heart opened to the presence of God and to one another.
2. Perhaps revisit the paragraph above as a reminder about the purpose of the series. You might also want to share personal reflections or the results of your experiment from the previous week.
3. Each week's guide begins with a quote. Use this as you like. It might be a conversation starter or perhaps a thought to come back to later in your study.
4. Read all of the scriptures listed for the week. You might like to use a few different translations, each giving a slightly different emphasis or tone. Read out loud, paying attention to genre, context and characters. Make use of any footnotes and cross references to help you get a handle on what's happening in the scene. Make notes or have a conversation about any questions that arise or discoveries you make.
5. Then take a look at the concepts. These were probably covered in the sermon and might help you to look at the deeper themes in the passages. Make a note of any other key ideas or themes that arise. Be attentive to what the Spirit might be saying.
6. If you are in a group, work through the dialogue questions one by one. Feel free to let those conversations take twists and turns. Keep noting the challenges and insights that emerge. Creating environments of safety, curiosity, honour and sincerity is key for meaningful dialogue. If you are on your own, perhaps enter into dialogue with Jesus. Ask him the questions and see what He says!
7. Close by giving thanks and honouring your brothers and sisters in prayer.

The **reflection** is for you to mull over during the week in a deeper way. Perhaps wind this into your quiet time or journaling practice.

Similarly, the **experiment** is an opportunity to act on something you've learned or been challenged by. Sharing experiences of these experiments with others can be a real opportunity for growth and encouragement.

# Week 1: Overview & Background

***"The past, even its sins, is not something to forget but something to offer to the Lord in thanksgiving for His mercy."***

— Henri Nouwen

## SCRIPTURE

- **Acts 7:54–8:3:** Stephen's martyrdom and Saul's persecution of the early church.
- **Philippians 3:4–6:** Paul's reflection on his pre-Christian life and religious credentials.
- **1 Timothy 1:12–16:** Paul's testimony of receiving mercy as an example of scandalous grace.

## CONCEPTS

- Paul's story begins as Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee violently persecuting Christians.
- God's sovereign grace in calling Saul, a "chief of sinners," as an agent of His redemptive plan.
- Paul's life as a narrative of radical transformation and participation in Christ's work.

## DIALOGUE

1. What stands out to you about Saul's life before encountering Christ?
2. How does God's grace redefine our past failures or brokenness for His purposes?
3. Reflect on your own story. How has God redeemed parts of your life for His mission?

## REFLECTION

How does eyeballing God's grace over your own life shape your sense of identity in Christ?

## EXPERIMENT

Share an element of your redemption story with someone this week.

# Week 2: Conversion & Early Christian Life

*"The call of Christ requires both courage and surrender. It transforms, but it also sends us."*  
— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## SCRIPTURE

- **Acts 9:1-19:** Paul's conversion and Ananias's role in restoring him.
- **Galatians 1:11-24:** Paul's defense of his apostolic authority, rooted in direct revelation

## CONCEPTS

- Paul's dramatic encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus.
- The courage and obedience of Ananias in welcoming and restoring Saul.
- Paul's early years of preparation and transformation through revelation.

## DIALOGUE

1. Why might revelation be central to transformation in the Christian life?
2. What role have others played in your response to revelation?
3. What might God be asking you to courageously step into right now?

## REFLECTION

Reflect on a time in your story when you sensed God's call to something new. How did you respond?

## EXPERIMENT

Pick one act of courageous obedience this week.

# Week 3: First Steps in Mission

*"Mission is not the invention of human strategy but the overflow of a Spirit-filled life."*  
— Leslie Newbigin

## SCRIPTURE

- **Acts 11:19–30:** The growth of the church in Antioch and Barnabas's encouragement of Paul.
- **Acts 13:1–3:** The commissioning of Paul and Barnabas for their first missionary journey.

## CONCEPTS

The church in Antioch discerning and commissioning Paul and Barnabas for mission.

- Paul's shift from object to agent of grace.
- The Holy Spirit's role in calling, equipping and sending the ecclesia for mission.

## DIALOGUE

1. How does the body of Christ discern and affirm God's calling on its members today?
2. What role does the Holy Spirit play in preparing us for mission?
3. Who in your life do you sense God might be calling? How can you encourage them?

## REFLECTION

How have you discerned and responded to the Holy Spirit's missional call in your own life?

## EXPERIMENT

Commit to praying daily for someone you sense God is calling.