



Teaching Guide  
AND Essentials

- **FOR ADULTS** -



GROUP MEMBERS USE *THE BRINK*, *FUSION FAMILY*, OR *FUSION NEXT*  
DEVOTIONAL STUDY GUIDES



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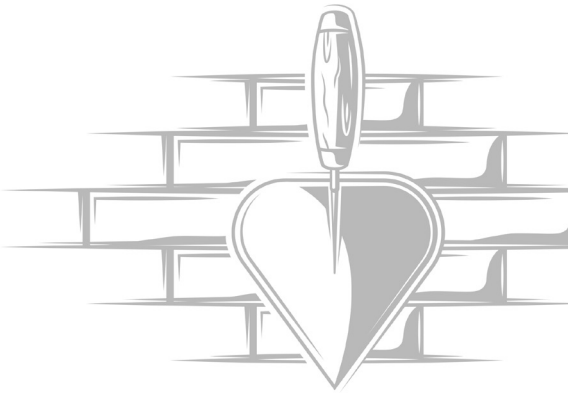


**FAMILY THEME**

Paul

**LESSON OBJECTIVE:** Learners put life lessons from Paul into action.

**STUDY TEXT:** Various Scriptures from Acts and the Epistles



**CHECKLIST**

- Study the biblical text and Adult Teacher's Guide.
- Review the *Adult Teaching Outline* (Adult Handout 5-1 or AH 5-1). You can take notes on this editable document as you study. You can also use it as a guide to teach from.
- Review *PowerPoint 5* and insert your own questions if needed.
- Print and make copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 5-2), the *My Message Handout* (AH 5-3), and *Parent Page* (PP-5) if necessary. For free access to these handouts, scan the QR code on page 3 of this teaching guide or go to [d6.family/6673](https://d6.family/6673).
- Distribute *Parent Page* (PP-5) to parents.

**In This Character Study**

- An Introduction to Paul
- Key Events in Paul's Life
- Life Lessons to Apply From Paul
- Ways to Respond

Verse of the  
Month

1 THESSALONIANS  
2:12

# CONNECT

Choose one of the **Connect** options to capture attention and get this session started.

**OPTION 1:** To begin, consider showing this interview with former MLB star Darryl Strawberry: [tinyurl.com/StrawFaith](http://tinyurl.com/StrawFaith). Strawberry battled addiction and even spent time in prison before having his life transformed by Jesus. (You can hear Strawberry’s full story on Episode #250 of *The D6 Podcast*. Consider sending it to group members: [tinyurl.com/StrawD6](http://tinyurl.com/StrawD6).) Transition to the lesson by saying: *Today we will examine the life of the apostle Paul. He persecuted believers and was viewed as an unlikely convert. Yet the power of Jesus changed his life.*

**OPTION 2:** Ask your learners to share what they consider to be the “Top 10” Scriptures from Paul’s letters. After several are shared, discuss the importance of Paul’s letters and what they mean to the Christian faith. After discussion, say: *All Scripture is important, but God used Paul in a special way to help us understand the gospel message. We will learn more about Paul today.*

**OPTION 3:** Write the following statement on the board: *God loves to change sinners into saints.* Then briefly tell the story of John Newton who went from slave trader to slave to free man to saved by God’s grace. After sharing Newton’s story, say: *Today we will see how God saved Paul, an enemy of the faith, and used Him in great ways.*

# LEARN + EXPLORE + APPLY

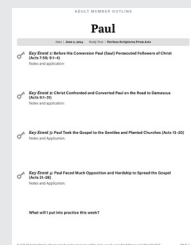
Distribute copies of the *Adult Member Outline* (AH 5-2) and summarize the following to your group about the background of Paul.

## Meet Paul

Christians often consider the apostle Paul to be one of the greatest thinkers, teachers, and preachers of the early church. We know that Paul, then known as Saul, was born to devoutly Jewish parents from the tribe of Benjamin ([Philippians 3:5](#)). From his birth in Tarsus, located in the southern part of modern-day Turkey, he received Roman citizenship, a privilege he would call upon at various times during his ministry ([Acts 22:24–29](#)). While it is unknown if he was ever married, it is certain that by the time of his ministry, he was single ([1 Corinthians 7:8–9](#)). He wrote 13 of the New Testament’s 27 books, about 28% of its content. He worked hard and traveled far in order to spread the news that Jesus was the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham



AH 5-1



AH 5-2

## TEACHING TIP

Cultivate your student-teacher relationships by showing loving concern for your group members.

You will not have time to read all the Scriptures listed for this lesson. Summarize the commentary and read the Scripture passages you feel are most important.

([Genesis 12:3](#)) and the glorious reason God had brought the nation of Israel into existence. Paul went from persecutor to proclaimer of the Christian faith. Our study will follow Paul's life and ministry primarily from the New Testament book of Acts.

### Key Events in Moses' Life

#### **KEY TRUTH: Before His Conversion Paul (Saul) Persecuted Followers of Christ ([Acts 7:58; 9:1-4](#))**

Stephen, a deacon who was full of faith and the Holy Spirit ([Acts 6:5](#)), fearlessly stood before the high priest and delivered a compelling sermon from the history of Israel's relationship with God. This powerful sermon resulted in the enraged mob dragging Stephen out of the city to stone him. They piled their outer garments at the feet of a man named Saul ([Acts 7:58](#)). It is this man whose heart would be changed and would later boldly carry the message of the gospel into the non-Jewish world.

Following the execution of Stephen, Saul continued to persecute the church. Even through persecution, the church was testifying to the grace of God through Jesus as believers preached the gospel and lived in love and obedience to God. Meanwhile, Saul pursued the believers with intense house-to-house searches. When finding these followers of the Way, he would drag both men and women off to prison ([Acts 8:3](#)). With anger on his breath and murder in his heart, Saul acquired the orders and papers needed to lead a raiding party to Damascus and arrest any Christ-followers he could find ([Acts 9:1-3](#)).

#### **KEY TRUTH: Christ Confronted and Converted Paul on the Road to Damascus ([Acts 9](#))**

Armed with authority and men from the high priest, Saul made his way north to the city of Damascus. As he approached the city a bright light from Heaven caused him to fall to the ground. While he attempted to shield his eyes, he heard the voice of Jesus asking why Saul continued persecuting Jesus' people ([Acts 9:1-5](#)). The Savior's tenderness toward the persecuted people shines in the question, *Why are you persecuting me?* So intimately did Jesus identify with His people that Saul's persecution of the believers was a persecution of Jesus. Jesus showed mercy toward Saul. He confronted Saul in a way that could lead to repentance, rather than simply striking the persecutor of His people dead. Jesus then instructed Saul to go into the city where someone would provide further instructions. Now the fierce and self-righteous Saul of Tarsus was a blind man who had to be assisted into Damascus ([verses 6-9](#)).

Meanwhile, God prepared a man named Ananias to be God’s messenger of grace to Saul. The Lord directed Ananias to go to a street named Straight, find the house of Judas, restore sight to Saul, and deliver the gospel message to him. Ananias, willing but apprehensive, clarified with God that this was the same man who had been persecuting believers. God allayed Ananias’ fears and assured him that this was part of God’s plan for Saul’s life and the broader kingdom of God. Satisfied and obedient, Ananias found Saul where God had instructed, and addressed him as *Brother Saul*. After his vision was restored, Saul was baptized then ate after fasting for three days (**verses 10–19**).

After his healing, Saul immediately began preaching the gospel of Jesus as the risen Lord. This amazed the Jewish authorities (**verses 20–22**). To avoid an assassination plot, Saul was secretly brought out of Damascus in a large basket lowered over the wall (**verses 23–25**). In this account, Luke did not mention that Paul traveled to Arabia around this time. This trip provided some relief to the other believers from the intense Jewish reaction to Saul’s conversion, as well as a time of study and prayer that shaped and finalized Saul’s new understanding of Scripture and the work of God (Galatians 1:17). Paul later tried to approach the other disciples but was viewed with suspicion. It was then that a kind man known as Barnabas (Son of Encouragement) took the initiative, introduced Saul to the others, and told how he had effectively preached the gospel, debated opponents, and was being hunted for his faith. Upon hearing this the other believers began to accept that God had really changed Saul from a persecutor of the faith to a proclaimer of the gospel (**verses 26–31**).

#### DISCUSS:

- *When has someone encouraged you and helped you in your walk with Christ or ministry?*

#### KEY TRUTH: Paul Took the Gospel to the Gentiles and Planted Churches (Acts 13–20)

As the church in Antioch met, prayed, and worshiped together, the Holy Spirit led the believers to set apart Saul and Barnabas as gospel emissaries to the world. After fasting, praying, and laying hands on these two men the church sent them on their way (**Acts 13:2–3**). Luke recorded three different missionary journeys. Let’s pull out some of the highlights.

**First Journey:** We read about Paul’s first missionary journey in **Acts 13–14**. Their first encounter in Cyprus involved opposition from a false prophet/sorcerer called Bar-Jesus or Elymas. This was when Saul began to be called Paul—the Greek version of his Hebrew name



#### PowerPoint 5

Discussion questions can also be found on the *Adult Teaching Outline* (AH 5-1), and on *PowerPoint 5*, which is customizable. Files *5A* and *5B* are provided for customization.

(13:9). Paul dealt with this opposition by pronouncing temporary blindness on the false prophet. This resulted in the proconsul over that region coming to faith (13:11–12). As they traveled, they preached and founded churches in Antioch (Pisidia), Iconium, and Lystra. Usually, the group would engage the local synagogue first. Here they would find people who were familiar with the story of God’s redemption but were missing the knowledge that Jesus was the Promised Messiah (14:1–7). After engaging the Jewish inhabitants, the group would turn their efforts toward cross-cultural ministry, dealing with people who knew nothing of the True God. In Lystra, disgruntled Jews from previous encounters stirred so much trouble that Paul was stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19–20). After a miraculous recovery, they retraced their steps for the purpose of encouraging and strengthening the churches as they made their way back to Antioch (14:21–28).

#### DISCUSS:

- *When missionaries go to an unevangelized area to establish a church, what are some challenges they might encounter?*

**Second Journey:** Paul embarked on his second missionary journey accompanied by Silas (Acts 15:40–18:22). In Lystra, a young man named Timothy also joined the team (16:1–3). God then redirected their team through a vision of a person from Macedonia requesting their help (16:6–9). The team set out for Macedonia and landed in a city called Philippi. A small but thriving church began as Paul and Silas ministered throughout the city (16:11–15). After a dispute with some slave owners, the missionary team landed in jail. Though beaten, they were miraculously delivered from jail and the jailer came to faith (16:25–34). After leaving Philippi the team saw success as well as opposition in Thessalonica and Berea. In Athens, Paul engaged some of the philosophers of the city on the Areopagus (Hill of Ares) essentially defending his Christian faith to the Greek philosophers (17:16–33). Upon leaving Athens the team stayed for a year and a half in Corinth before returning to Antioch (18:1–11).

**Third Journey:** During Paul’s third missionary journey (Acts 18:23—20:38), he once again focused on the work in Asia Minor. He found a ministry base in Ephesus where he remained for more than two years. After a riot destabilized the area Paul traveled throughout the region encouraging the churches and their leaders (19:1–41). One particularly blessed time, Paul preached until midnight in the town of Troas and a sleepy young man fell from a third-story window and died. God graciously raised the young man through Paul so that their celebration was not overshadowed by sorrow (20:7–12). This project ended with Paul making his way back to Jerusalem.

## **KEY TRUTH: Paul Faced Much Opposition and Hardship to Spread the Gospel (Acts 21–28)**

While in Jerusalem a misunderstanding at the Temple sparked a Jewish riot that led to Paul's unjust arrest. The accusation was that Paul had brought an uncircumcised Gentile into the part of the Temple restricted only to Jews. In fact, Paul had been seen with a Gentile in the city, but the Gentile friend did not accompany him into the restricted Temple area (**Acts 21:26–30**). These false allegations began several years of custody for Paul. At the end of Acts, Luke traced Paul's journey as a prisoner from Jerusalem to Rome.

During this process he endured unfair hearings before Jewish common people (**22:1–21**), the Sanhedrin (**23:1–11**), before the provincial governor Felix (**24:1–27**), and before Felix's successor Festus and King Agrippa (**25:1–26:32**). God assured Paul that he would stand before Caesar in Rome (**27:23–25**). After surviving another shipwreck, Paul, along with the other prisoners, soldiers, and sailors, arrived in Rome (**28:11–16**).

Throughout his ministry Paul experienced hardships in the forms of physical ailments, threats to his life, difficult living conditions, multiple shipwrecks, as well as multiple imprisonments and beatings (2 Corinthians 11:16–33). Paul thrived in all these situations demonstrating the depth of his joy in Christ. He was willing to suffer so that the gospel could go into all the world. Early Christian tradition claimed that Paul died by beheading during the reign of Nero. True to his writing, Paul sought to glorify Christ by life or by death.

## **APPLY + RESPOND:**

### **Life Lessons to Apply From Paul**

**Life Lesson 1: God saves sinners from all backgrounds and uses them for His glory.** God saved Paul, an enemy of the faith, and used him to take the gospel to the ends of the earth and to write a significant portion of the New Testament. He wants to use each of us as well.

#### **DISCUSS:**

- *In what ways are you serving God and bringing Him glory? How could you do more of this?*
- *How should Paul's life encourage us to share the gospel with all people, even those who seem too far gone?*



**Life Lesson 2: Like Paul, believers are to press on to become more like Christ and to serve Him (Philippians 3:12–14).** God wants to make us more and more like Christ as we strive to walk with and serve Him.

**DISCUSS:**

- *The first part of Paul's life was spent far from belief in Christ. How might his testimony aid us when sharing the gospel with those who think God could never love them or use them?*
- *How can we avoid complacency and remain fervent in our walk with Christ?*

**Life Lesson 3: Seek to share the gospel wherever God leads you.** Following Paul's example, believers are to follow Christ's Great Commission and seek to make disciples wherever God leads us.

**DISCUSS:**

- *In what ways are you being disciplined?*
- *How are you seeking to share the gospel with people God has placed around you?*

**Life Lesson 4: Living for Christ and sharing the gospel with the lost world often brings difficulty and persecution.** Paul faced much opposition and Jesus warned us that following Him would bring trials and difficulty ([John 16:33](#)). However, it will all be worth it when we reach Heaven.

**DISCUSS:**

- *What types of opposition have you faced because you follow Jesus?*
- *Why should we trust God when He gives us difficult or dangerous instruction?*

**Life Lesson 5: Grow in faith and knowledge of God by reading and putting into practice the inspired truth Paul wrote.**

**DISCUSS:**

- *There are some today who reject Paul's writing and refuse to accept it as part of Scripture. Why is it important that we view Paul's letters as the inspired and inerrant Word of God?*
- *What is one lesson from the life of Paul that you will apply to your life this week?*

**Ways to Respond:** Encourage your learners to put what they have learned into action this week.

**OPTION 1:** Encourage learners to share the gospel with someone this week. They can think of someone they know who needs Christ and think through how they would begin the conversation and what they would seek to share. It might help them to write their testimony and the main points of the gospel message before they share. AH 5-3 *My Message* could help them with this. They can also watch for other opportunities God might give them to share.

**OPTION 2:** Ask learners to encourage a missionary family by sending them an email or contributing extra to their ministry account. Let missionaries know that you appreciate their work and know they experience both joys and pains in their ministries.

**OPTION 3:** Discuss what it means to “press on” to know and serve Christ. How do we do that? Encourage your learners to move out of any complacency they have felt and to do what will help them become more like Christ and serve Him.

Encourage your group members to complete the daily devotions in the D6 devotional magazines this week.

## Building Blocks

Share these Bible basics with your learners.

After Paul’s conversion to Christ, his goal was to share the gospel with both Jews and Gentiles. The book of Acts includes his missionary journeys.

## Pray!



AH 5-3



PP-5

*The Parent Page (PP-5) is a resource to help parents discuss the truths of this lesson with their children at home. Give copies of this page to those who will benefit from it and encourage them to use it at home this week. Parent Page is also available for FREE download at [D6home.com](http://D6home.com). (No password required.)*

# Notes

