



## Session 1: Paul's Identity

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### **READ:**

Acts 9:1-31; 11:19-30; 12:25; Romans 6:1-14

### **CONNECT: My Identity and Loyalty**

Briefly answer the following questions:

- To what or to whom are you deeply loyal?
- What is your ethnic identity?
- Do you see any connection between those two answers? If so, what?

### **WATCH: Paul's Cultural Background**

As you watch the video, fill in the following:

#### **A. Paul's Jewish Background**

List experiences Paul had before his conversion.

The video mentions two ways that Paul's Jewish heritage influenced his Christian theology:

1. Paul believed in the authority of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Paul was deeply impacted by the \_\_\_\_\_ that God would send the \_\_\_\_\_.

"Paul didn't see Christianity as a \_\_\_\_\_ of Judaism. Rather, he firmly believed that Christianity was the \_\_\_\_\_ of his Jewish heritage."

#### **B. Paul's Contact with Gentiles and Greco-Roman Culture**

List two ways the video mentions that Paul's contact with the Gentile world affected his ministry:

- 1.
- 2.

"An important theme in many of Paul's epistles was that, in Christ, the \_\_\_\_\_ was spreading from Israel to the ends of the earth."

According to the video, what two things does a person do to become a “child of Abraham”?

- 1.
- 2.

## **DISCUSS**

- What is something new you learned about Paul from the video?
- In what ways did Paul’s character and education prepare him for the work God had for him to do?
- What impact did Paul’s Jewish background have on him and his theology?
- Paul’s theology is deeply grounded in what God revealed in the Old Testament, so if we want to understand what Paul wrote, we too need to be familiar with the Old Testament. What has helped you understand the Old Testament?
- What impact did Paul’s contact with Greco-Roman culture have on his ministry?
- In Paul’s community, Jews were the “insiders” of the faith and Gentiles were the “outsiders.” In your community, who are the insiders? Who are the outsiders? What do we learn from Paul about how to relate to these two groups in a way that is true to the essentials of the faith?

## **STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART: The Believer’s Union with Christ**

- Throughout Paul’s letters, he emphasizes the change that Jesus Christ works in the landscape of reality. Read Galatians 3:26-29 and list the changes that being in Christ makes in the life of the believer.
- Paul always links the truth with action. According to Romans 6:1-14, how do we become united with Christ? What changes does Paul believe should happen in the life of a believer as a result of being in Christ?
- Rewrite Romans 6: 2 in your own words: *“How can we who died to sin still live in it?”*

## **APPLY:**

- Where do you get your identity?
- On what basis do you evaluate the identity of others?
- Where has this study encouraged you in your faith?
- Where has it challenged you? What do you want to do as a result?