

FBC Small-Group Materials
Week of November 23rd, 2006
Romans 1:1-2; The Life of Paul

For Small-Group Leaders

Dear Leaders,

As we learned last week, the book of Romans has had a huge impact in people's lives through the ages. What is it about this book that has so changed the lives of saints over time? To answer that question, we must know something of the man who wrote the book. His name at one time was Saul, changed to Paul upon conversion to Christ. Paul had a deep sense of his own failure and his need for God's grace. On one occasion he called himself the "least of all the saints." His life is a story of hope. "If God can save my life, he can save yours." We can imagine that if Paul was among us, he might say something like that. This week we focus a bit on the life of this one who called himself a "slave of Christ." May his life stir us towards our Savior.

Blessings,

Scott

These small-group materials are available at the info table each Sunday and at www.fbcdavis.org.

Discussion Starters:

- **Perspective** – On a foggy day in the valley it is easy to lose perspective. It can be cloudy and gray on the valley floor but if you head to the foothills, it can be sunny and glorious. Share about a time when a change in perspective made a difference.

Discussion Questions:

Introduction: Read Romans 1:1-2

1. Paul had a remarkable mentality. Though he was a very learned man, he regarded himself as a servant (literally a slave) of Christ. How was he able to do that?
2. What does Paul say about the gospel in these verses?
3. Paul considered the news about Christ so good, he was willing to suffer deeply for it (beatings, imprisonment, etc.). How good would something have to be in order for Paul to become willing to suffer as he did? What did Paul know about the Gospel that we may not yet fully understand?
4. Please read Romans 1:8-13, where we find insight into Paul's heart for people. What seems to be the cause of his longing? (Leaders Note: You may want to read aloud the following insight to help frame the discussion on this question:

Text Insight - Unlike the churches that Paul had established in Corinth and elsewhere, it is unlikely that Paul had ever met the Roman Christians to whom he was writing. The believing community in Rome may have consisted of five or more home fellowships. Mostly they were made up of Gentile members, though Jewish Christians seem to be in attendance too.

5. As we continue to explore the life of Paul, we turn to some of Paul's other writings. Please read 2 Timothy 1:3-10. What have Paul and Timothy shared together in the past? How would you describe the nature of Paul's friendship with Timothy?
6. Please read Romans 8:18-21 and 28-37. This passage illuminates the hope which propelled Paul forward through his sufferings and difficulties. What stands out to you about Paul's hope?
7. Paul's picture of the future was glorious. What is glorious about the future, according to Paul?
8. Please read about Paul's aim in Philippians 3:10-14. What goals were not integral to Paul's life? What goal is he running after in order to "win the prize for which God" had called him heavenward...?

Getting Personal:

- Now that you have had a chance to learn a bit about Paul's life, what stands out to you his life?

Putting it into Practice:

- Share one way you would like to apply this week's lesson during the coming week.