

## Session 1: Reconciled

### Scripture questions:

Acts 8:1-4

Acts 9:1-19

Acts 9:23-31

**Based on these three passages, how would you describe Saul's life? (Saul is renamed Paul later on.)**

Romans 1:18-23

**How do people have the ability to clearly see the character of God by looking around them?**

**In this passage, what does humanity choose to do with this knowledge of God?**

Romans 2:17-23

**How are the people in this passage different from those in the material you just read in Romans 1:18-23?**

**Do these people have knowledge of God's expectations? What do they do with this knowledge?**

Romans 3:9-12

**Does Paul think humanity is more alike, or different? Why?**

Romans 3:21-25

**When we are made right with God, does He forgive all of our sin, or just some of our sin? What does God do with our sin? Why?**

Romans 5:9-11

**What was our former status with God?**

**Why does Paul repeatedly describe our relationship with God as "reconciled?"**

Romans 6:1-14

**What attitude does Paul say that we should have toward the sin in our lives?**

## How does Paul tell us to identify with Christ?

Romans 7:15-24

**What does Paul struggle with? Are you surprised by this passage?**

**Compare the struggle expressed in chapter 7 with the expectations in chapter 6. How do we reconcile the two different perspectives that Paul is expressing in these different chapters?**

Romans 8:1-2

Romans 8:12-17

**How do these passages answer the question Paul asked in 7:24?**

**How do the ideas in this passage help us understand the expectations in chapter 6 and the struggle in chapter 7?**

**Paul:** a faithful, well-educated Jew who was so passionate about protecting his faith that he led the persecution of the first Christians. He then had an encounter with Christ, which changed his life, and as a result, Paul dedicated his life to serving the Church.

**The Pauline Epistles:** a group of books that originally began as letters written by Paul.

**Paul's letters are written with certain patterns** that generally include these five distinct parts:

- The Greeting

- Thanksgiving and Prayer
- The Body (reveals what is most important to understand)
- Directions (tell us what to do, or how to behave)
- The Closing

## The Nature of Salvation

- We are all in need of restoration and salvation because of the sin in our lives, and all people need their relationship with God to be restored. As Paul talks about humanity, he explains that both Jews and Gentiles, though very different, are united in sin and guilt.
- **Saved, born again, or awakened** are all common terms that describe the inner transformation of a person's life when they allow God to repair their broken relationship with Him. Paul uses the words justification and reconciliation to talk about that repaired relationship.
- When God passes over sins previously committed, it is called justification. This allows our relationship with Him to be restored.
- **Reconciliation** is a term that is used when God chooses to embrace us, His rightful enemies, though we don't deserve it.

## The Consequences of Salvation

All people struggle with sin, but our attitude toward sin should change as we embrace God. We should find it impossible to continue in that which separates us from God. While Paul explains the struggle we have within ourselves to be the people of God, and to fight against the temptations of sin around us, we can be hopeful because God provides us strength through the Spirit of God who lives within us.

### Application Questions:

**Paul talks about salvation as a relationship, not as a specific act that is completed at one point in time. How would you describe the history of your relationship with God? What is its current state?**

**Paul wants you to understand your guilt and fallen nature. Why is recognizing, accepting, and embracing your guilt and sin hard for you to do? How can accepting these faults be liberating?**

**What sins in your life are keeping you from being the person God desires and expects you to be? What steps can you take to foster a dependence upon God and His Spirit in order to lead you to victory in your struggle with sin?**

**If Paul struggled to overcome sin on his own, what does this say about the likelihood of your ability to overcome it on your own? How can you involve others in your struggles?**

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