

## WEEK 1: CHAPTER 1

### ABOUT THIS SERIES

In our *Galatians* series, St. Mark is walking verse-by-verse and chapter-by-chapter through Paul's letter to the Galatians to discover how an ancient manuscript like Galatians gives us timeless truths for today. Your group will go deeper into the series by learning about the cultural and scriptural context to Paul's letter.

### ITEMS NEEDED

Bibles

### CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pray for your group | <input type="checkbox"/> Read through the Discussion Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean meeting area  | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean bathroom                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Crack front door        |

### OPENING (5 MIN)

*After a general welcome, say:* Okay, friends, let's get going with today's icebreaker—

### WHAT'S A BEHIND-THE-SCENES DOCUMENTARY YOU'VE WATCHED? IT COULD BE A PEEK INTO THE LIFE OF A MUSICIAN, A MOVIE, OR CULTURAL EVENT...

*After a brief discussion, say:* The reason we watch any behind-the-scenes documentary is because we're interested in knowing more about something than the average consumer. As St. Mark walks chapter-by-chapter and verse-by-verse through the book of Galatians, we're going to go a bit deeper and behind-the-scenes into its Scriptural and cultural context.

Sometimes we can approach God looking for him to say something about a specific topic, but in this series, we're letting God set the agenda and letting him decide what he wants to talk about with us.

But first, let's pray.

### OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

*Host, lead the group in prayer.*

### KEY VERSES (5 MIN)

*After a prayer, say:* Let's start by reading the key verses of Galatians 1:

**CAN SOMEONE READ ALOUD THE FOLLOWING VERSE I CALL OUT, AND I'LL READ THE SUMMARY:**

VERSE	SUMMARY
Vs. 1	Paul describes himself as one of Jesus' select apostles and the resurrection is lifted up as a key event.
Vs. 8	Paul teaches that if we add anything to the gospel, it's no longer the gospel. From the very beginning of the church, we hear the message that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in the work of Christ alone.
Vs. 13	Paul describes his BC life, (his life before Christ.)
Vs. 23	Paul describes his AD life, (his life after his encounter with Christ.)

**WHICH OF THESE KEY VERSES INTRIGUES YOU THE MOST, AND WHY?**

**PAUL'S BACKSTORY (15-20 MIN)**

*After a discussion, say:* As Paul writes to the churches of Galatia, he briefly mentions his former way of life. We can read more about this in the book of Acts that records the history of the Early Church.

**EVERYONE TURN TO ACTS 7:54-60, AND CAN I GET A VOLUNTEER TO READ IT ALOUD FOR US?**

*After the reading, say:* Stephen is the first among many martyrs of the church throughout history. Ironically, Paul, the greatest evangelist in history, is present condoning his death.

**CAN I GET A VOLUNTEER TO READ ACTS 8:1-3 ALOUD FOR US?**

**WHAT INSIGHT DOES THIS BACKSTORY GIVE YOU INTO THE APOSTLE PAUL?**

*After the reading, say:* Say what you want about Paul, but when he sets his mind to do something, he does it with zeal! Whether in persecuting the church or in expanding it.

**LET'S READ ABOUT SAUL'S CONVERSION. CAN SOMEONE READ ACTS 9:1-9, AND ALSO ACTS 9:19B-26?**

**HOW DO YOU THINK THE APOSTLE PAUL "PROVED HIMSELF" TO THE CHRISTIANS THAT HE WAS A LEGITIMATE FOLLOWER OF JESUS?**

**HOW DOES THAT INFORM THE WAY WE "PROVE" OUR FAITH TO NON-CHRISTIANS TODAY?**

*After a discussion, say:* This brings up the people in our lives who have yet to follow Jesus. As we talked about on Sunday, Paul's life reminds us to never finish someone's story. We have no idea when or if Jesus will reveal himself to someone, no matter how resistant they are to him.

**IF YOU'RE COMFORTABLE SHARING, WHO IS THE NON-CHRISTIAN IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU'VE TRIED AND TRIED TO REACH AND IT'S TEMPTING TO JUST GIVE UP?**

Be encouraged! Jesus loves them even more than you do and is pursuing them even more than you know. In our prayer time together, we're going to pray that God would save the people in our lives who have yet to follow Jesus.

**CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT AND PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)**

*After a discussion, say:* Before we get to our prayers, though, two quick announcements:

One, Prosper the City is going to be coming up after Easter, so just prepare your calendars now for some more Small Group meetings in late April and May.

Two, every Small Group is going to sponsor one of the prayerwalks this summer. We'll help plan routes, plan Scripture, and bring refreshments for our particular week. So be looking at which of your Wednesday evenings this summer would be good for that.

Let's close things out with prayer—

**ARE THERE ANY PRAYER REQUESTS TODAY?**

*Host, begin with a prayer saying,*

“Dear God, forgive me when I think someone in my life is too far gone for you to reach. I pray you would meet and give faith to the people whose names we say aloud now...

*[Leave time for your Small Group to list the names of non-Christians they know.]*

In addition, Lord, we pray for..." *[Continue with this week's prayer requests.]*