

Welcome to Week 2 of Pixelated! We hope you enjoyed your first week of this study. Pixelated is all about getting perspective on fuzzy concepts in the Bible by looking to Jesus. You might notice that this guide is a little different-- we hope it will give you extra support as you lead your group into some challenging conversations this week!

BIG IDEA

Don't miss God's work to reach you because of your work to reach Him.

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO KNOW?

Share a story about a time you encountered God in an unexpected way.

Read Acts 22:1-22. How would you retell this story?

Paul started out as Saul, a religious Zealot who thought he was honoring God by persecuting some of the first believers in Jesus ("the Way" was a name given to the sect of people who worshipped Jesus at the time of Paul's conversion). Even while Saul was actively persecuting the people of God, Jesus revealed himself to him in a powerful way.

Listen to the way *The Message* paraphrases the beginning of this passage. How does this impact your understanding of Paul's testimony?

Read this passage aloud to your group:

"My dear brothers and fathers, listen carefully to what I have to say before you jump to conclusions about me." When they heard him speaking Hebrew, they grew even quieter. No one wanted to miss a word of this.

²⁻³ He continued, "I am a good Jew, born in Tarsus in the province of Cilicia, but educated here in Jerusalem under the exacting eye of Rabbi Gamaliel, thoroughly instructed in our religious traditions. And I've always been passionately on God's side, just as you are right now.

Read Philippians 3:3-14. How does Paul's message exemplify this week's big idea? Support your answer.

Paul was the most faithful and obedient religious person that you could find, but in all of his effort to work his way to God, he had missed the point entirely. Once he got a taste of who Jesus really was, Paul was willing to trade all of the esteem and reputation his religiosity granted him in order to have a loving, personal relationship with Jesus.

Hillsong United sings a song called, "Scandal of Grace" that communicates this passage well. You may consider playing this song at some point in the meeting as a way to integrate praise and worship within your group. Here is a YouTube Link to the song: <https://youtu.be/cka7fYhWj2E>





LIFE GROUPS

LEADER GUIDE

WHAT IS MY INITIAL REACTION?

Can you relate to Paul in any way? Explain.

Are you someone who tends to “work” to reach God?

Do you ever feel spiritual guilt or spiritual exhaustion? What might be the cause(s) of these kinds of feelings?

Read Ephesians 2:1-10. How does this passage challenge you? How does it encourage you?

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

Read Philippians 2:1-13. How does this passage help you understand the difference between working to earn God’s love and responding to the love God has worked so hard to show you?

How does your understanding of this concept impact your relationships with others?

When we are constantly focused on working to get God’s love, we are constantly focused on ourselves. Accepting God’s love as a gift enables us to then turn our attention outward and learn to love people the way that Jesus loves us.

In what ways are you currently “working out your own salvation?”

Accepting the gift of God’s love does not mean we stop working. It just means that we stop trying to earn our relationship with him! Working out our salvation has more to do with living out our faith in love for our neighbor than it has to do with proving that we are saved.

Where is God asking you to **stop** working to get to him? Where is God asking you to **start** working out your own salvation?

How can you grow in gratitude toward Jesus this week?

