



## Freed By God

### RECAP

**This week's focus: Called by God to set people free and give Him glory.**

Paul, in the last half of Galatians 1, began his defense against those who were infiltrating the Galatian churches. He tried to remind his readers that his new way of life was a result of a miraculous turn of events and his whole life mission was to now bring glory to the God of his miraculous conversion. Paul recalled his brutal past of how he persecuted the church. Believing that he was just falling in line with those who had always been zealous for God. He briefly retold the story of his conversion as well as the "so that" which accompanied it. Paul was converted "so that" he might preach to the Gentiles. It was God who placed the call on his life, not some zealous ambition or conceited desire for attention.

After Paul's radical conversion on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9) and after the Lord returned his sight, Paul told us that he intentionally did not return to Jerusalem. Instead, following in the footsteps of Elijah (1 Kings 18-19), Paul returned to Arabia (Mt. Sinai/Horeb) and then he went off to Damascus for three years. He needed to regroup, recharge, and get reoriented prior to embarking on the Lord's mission for his life.

Then after those three years passed, Paul went to Jerusalem. He made it very clear that he only spent time with Peter and James. The text seems to suggest that Paul and Peter spent 15 days getting to know each other. They shared stories, presumably of Paul's conversion, and the many stories Peter would have had as he followed Jesus for the three years of his ministry life.

After those 15 days, Paul went off to Syria and Cilicia where he was relatively unknown by the different gatherings of the new converts to the "Way of Jesus." These people only knew Paul as Saul, the one who had been persecuting Jesus followers. Paul's personal account of his history was his way of trying to remind his readers that he was who he said he was, a miraculously converted follower of Jesus, and not some attention seeking people pleaser that the "Judaizers" were making him out to be.

Paul knew that the purity of the Gospel was at stake. His honest testimony of who he was before Christ and how God had set him free, gave him the authority, boldness, and power to address the main problem the Gentile Christians faced by adding to the Gospel.

He closed this section with the reminder that those from the churches of Judea who had heard he was dangerous were not actually fleeing from him. No, instead, they were giving God glory because they could see God working in Paul. May it be true of us today as well!



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### SHARE (5-10 min)

Icebreaker Question: Ask one person in your group to share their personal story of how they came to know Jesus. How did their life change?

### STUDY (about 30 min) Read Galatians 1:13-24

1. Why do you think Paul took so much time recounting his personal history and journey with God? Twice in this passage (vs 13 & 23) Paul reminds the Galatians of his past. Why is this important?
2. Read Paul's conversion experience in Acts 9:1-9. What stands out to you?
3. Paul tells the Galatians that when God called him to preach among the Gentiles, he "did not receive [the Gospel] from any man, nor was I taught it" (v.12) and that he "did not consult any human being" (v.16). Why is that information important in the context of this chapter?
4. In Galatians 1:13-14, we read about Paul's "zeal or passion" as Saul when he persecuted the early church. How can our zeal or passion for other things hinder the work of God?
5. Read Galatians 1:15-16. God transforms Paul's heart (passion and motivation). We see that Paul was called "so that" he might preach to the Gentiles. How has God changed your motivations and passions? What is your "so that"? Why do you think God has called you?
6. Paul followed the footsteps of Elijah, returned to Arabia (Mt. Sinai region) and Damascus. He needed to regroup, recharge, and get reoriented prior to embarking on the Lord's mission for his life. Where is your place you turn to refuel, recenter, and reorient your life?
7. Paul's personal story of transformation turned many to give God glory. If you had to convince someone that Christ is real by giving an example from your own life, what would you say?
8. Share a story from your life where your own journey into freedom or someone else who has led others to give God glory.

### SUPPORT (15 min)

Pray: Take time to pray for one another in ways the Lord has prompted based on your discussion.

Invite your life group to attend the Pregnancy Resource Center Banquet on Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. This is a free event at the Coconut Grove. Register at [prcbanquet.org](http://prcbanquet.org)