

GENERATE CAMP: Make it Matter

Session 2: The Work of God

What We Want Students to Learn: That a life of real impact is only possible because of the work Jesus did and continues to do through us.

Scripture:

- Narrative Snapshot: Paul recounting his transformation story (1 Corinthians 15:1–11)
- Supporting Passages: Romans 10:9–13 and Ephesians 2:8–10

Session Snapshot: Paul made an impact before Jesus. A big one. But it was the wrong kind of impact. It wasn't REAL impact. But when he was saved by faith in Christ, his impact was set on the right course. His life mattered, all because of the work Jesus did in and through Paul's life. We will look at Paul's writings as a guy who was radically transformed by the work of salvation in his life. Then we'll focus on Romans 10:9-13 as we discover the means of salvation, and Ephesians 2:8-10 as proof that Jesus' work empowers REAL impact.

Bible Background

The Bible Background is a focused, brief overview of some of the background info for the main passage you will be teaching.

Teacher Prep Video

Each Small Group Leader's Guide comes with a *Teacher Prep Video*. These are simply short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

Your teacher prep videos are located in your download, under Small Group Lesson Plans. There is a subfolder titled "Teacher Prep Videos" that will have a document for you. On the document, you should be able to click the link designated for the lesson you are currently on.

The Details

1 Corinthians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to the Church in Corinth.
- **Timeframe:** Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus in the spring shortly before Pentecost. We are unsure of what year, but it was likely between 53 AD and 55 AD.
- **Purpose:** Paul's first letter to the Corinthians was written to a divided church to call them to become united for the sake of the Gospel. He was calling the Church to lay down the things that divided them to fully embrace the one thing that is strong enough to unite them: Christ crucified! According to the *ESV Study Bible*, the central theme of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians was "the relationship between suffering and the power of the Spirit in Paul's apostolic life, ministry, and message."

Romans

- **Author:** Paul is the author of Romans.
- **Timeframe:** Romans was probably written From Corinth in the winter of 56-57 AD.
- **Purpose:** Since the church in Rome had not received comprehensive teaching on the basic system of salvation and other truths of Christianity, the primary goal for Romans was to ensure a good

understanding of such things. Also, since many Jewish Christians were rejecting some of the new Gentile converts, it was essential that a 'level playing field' be given to all Believers.

Ephesians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians. Of course, we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
- **Time frame:** Ephesians was probably written by Paul from prison in the latter years of his life, sometime around 60 or 61 AD.
- **Purpose:** Paul had a very close relationship with the church in Ephesus. It seems as if the motivation for the letter was simply that the church would know how he was faring in his imprisonment. But, true to form, Paul couldn't help but teach. The letter covers general teaching on the work of Christ to redeem believers, unity among believers, and how believers are supposed to conduct themselves.

The Main Point

The goal of this session is to help students understand that when we begin a relationship with Christ, He begins to do a great work in us and through us. This relationship is the source of power that enables us to live a life that matters. This life does not come from our own strength, but rather from understanding what Christ is doing in us. Paul had numerous reasons to boast, and yet he acknowledges His greatest strength is Christ. Our goal is for students to feel the same!

The Takeaway

Our relationship with Christ empowers us to go out into the world and live a life that matters. The difference we make is only possible because of the difference Jesus makes in our life.

Lesson Plan

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: an introductory activity called *Getting Started*; the Bible study section called *Digging In*; and an application-focused segment called *Wrapping Up*.

Getting Started

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This lesson will utilize pages 16-20 in the *Make it Matter* Student Book.
 - This activity will use pages 16-17.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - You'll need a possible prize or an idea of a prize. This could be candy or even something like getting to go first in line for food. Get creative!

FIRST, explain that you're going to play a simple game involving words. You'll need to divide students into two teams. Once you have the students divided into these teams, you'll split each team in half. This will create Group 1 and 2 for both Teams A and B.

NEXT, you'll tell students that the game will be played in three parts.

- **Part 1** will consist of Group 1 students having 30 seconds to come up with as many words as they can with the allotted letters on page 17 of the book. The students in Group 2 are not allowed to have their books open. Once the time concludes, it's time for Part 2.
- In **Part 2**, the Group 1 students will have 30 seconds to whisper to members of Group 2 the words they came up with. The catch is that **NO ONE** on Group 2 is allowed to have a writing utensil or phone in their hands. They must remember as many of the words as possible.
- **Part 3** is where the fun happens: This is where students from Group 2 of Teams A and Team B will try to remember the words their respective Team 1 shared with them. After Group 1 has had 30 seconds to share with Group 2, have the Group 2s share their answers out loud, taking turns, going back and forth, the only catch being that you can't say a word that the other team has already said. The team who says the last word wins.

Once you have explained the rules, facilitate the game. If possible, consider providing something as a prize for the winning team.

THEN, begin to explain why this activity was facilitated in this way. You'll want to say something like this:

- **Did you have fun? The challenge was to see which team worked the best. Ideally, the second group in each team benefitted from the work of the first group. You had someone going ahead of you, doing the work, and then passing the answers along to you. Now, whether or not you could remember them is on you. (LOL) But in theory, the first group paved the way for the second group.**

FINALLY, begin the transition to the Bible study by saying something like this:

- **What if I told you that when it comes to our faith, there was someone ahead of us doing work, and preparing a way for us? Today's lesson will take a look at who is doing the work both ahead of us and in us.**

If you want, have a student read the Session Intro from page 16, then transition to the *Digging In* portion of your session.

Digging In

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This activity will utilize pages 18-19 in the *Make it Matter* Student Book.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - You'll want to make sure students have something to write with, and a Bible or Bible app.

FIRST, have students turn to pages 18-19 in their Student Books. Explain that you'll be looking at two passages of Scripture, the first of which is in 1 Corinthians. Take a moment and use the Bible Background section of this lesson to give students the context for 1 Corinthians: who wrote it, when it was written, and why. Then, begin speaking about Paul. The following questions are also listed in the book:

- **What do you know about Paul's life before he met the risen Christ on the road to Damascus?**
 - *Answer:* He was a persecutor of the church. The religious elite believed Saul, the man we know as Paul, was a big solution for eliminating the Christ-followers.
- **How did Paul go from persecuting the Church to helping build it?**
 - *Answer:* He had an encounter with Jesus that led to a transformation in his life. He began a personal relationship with Jesus. When Christ enters our lives, He begins a work in us that can

drastically change us.

NEXT, start the transition toward your first scripture passage. Remind students that you're going to look at one narrative passage from Scripture in each small group time, and then look at how the Bible speaks to the principles we see demonstrated in the story.

Explain that the passage they are about to read is Paul reminding the Corinthians of what he discussed with them when he was previously with them. In the midst of this, he mentions his encounter with Jesus and what happened as a result. Read or have a student read 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. Then, as you did in session 1, instruct students to use the space provided on page 18 to write down anything they think is important or meaningful from the narrative. Give them a few moments to do this. Then, ask something like this:

- **What details or important points jumped out at you?**
 - Allow students to share. Engage in a discussion as you go, asking students, "Why do you think that is important?" or "Why did that stand out?" or offering your thoughts or observations as you go. (*Continue with the rest of the questions below, omitting any that you've already covered based on your students' responses.*)
- **Paul passed along to the Corinthians something that was passed along to him. He says that what was passed along was of "first importance." What is Paul referring to? What is of "first importance"?**
 - *Answer:* It's the Gospel message. Paul wanted the church to understand that before they move forward in doing anything else as the church, they must start with their faith in Christ. He points to himself having received it because he wants them to understand he was no better than them until Jesus transformed his life.
- **Why does Paul explain what Jesus did, including who all he appeared to?**
 - *Answer:* If Jesus didn't do what we claim He did on the cross, then it would be impossible for Him to be working in us today. Paul is fact-checking here. He is writing this letter at a time when these people are still alive. If the Corinthians didn't believe Paul, they could, in theory, ask these folks if what Paul was saying is true. If we are going to claim the strength of Christ working in us, we must have confidence that Christ has already been working before us.
- **Paul calls himself the least deserving person that Christ appeared to. This is an interesting note because we look at Paul as a legend within the church as a whole. Why do you think Paul would think he was the least of those Jesus appeared to?**
 - *Answer:* Paul could have had a multitude of reasons for believing he was less than the apostles. What's important is understanding that someone like Paul still had a proper view of himself within the Kingdom of God. Paul was humble. It could be easy for Paul to view himself as a hero within the church, but that thought process could create more problems down the road.
- **Look at vs. 10. What does Paul say was given to him to make him who he is?**
 - *Answer:* The grace of God.
- **How does Paul react to this gift of grace from God?**
 - *Answer:* He worked harder than anyone else. He made sure the grace of God was not given in vain.

THEN, explain that Paul was making an impact in the world around him before he met Jesus. But it was the wrong kind of impact! Once he encountered Christ, his life was transformed, and his impact was used powerfully to share God's love with people all over the world and throughout time. Say something like:

- **Paul speaks in this passage about the importance of the Gospel and how it changed his life. Living a life that truly matters starts with knowing Jesus and being transformed by this knowledge. This is**

what happened to Paul. And this is possible for each of us, as well. Let's look at two places from Paul's writings where he fleshes this truth out.

NEXT, direct students' attention to page 19 and instruct students to turn in their Bibles or bible apps to Romans 10. Then, either have a student read Romans 10:9-13 or read it yourself. When you're finished, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

- **Verse 9 says that "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Saved from what? Why do we need saving?**
 - *Answer:* Help students see that everyone sins (Rom. 3:23), and our sin separates us from God and earns death for us (Rom. 6:23). Apart from a saving relationship with Jesus, we can never be at peace with God. When we come to faith in Jesus, we gain eternal life with God (John 3:16) and a life of purpose and meaning on this earth (John 10:10).
- **What does Paul say we must do to be saved? Do we have to work hard to earn God's grace? Do we have to check all the right boxes of what we think a Christian looks like? What do we have to do?**
 - *Answer:* Confess and believe. Paul says that salvation comes through faith in the person and work of Jesus.

Explain that the Gospel is powerful in its simplicity. God has made a way back to Him through His Son Jesus, and that relationship is possible by faith. Explain that Paul fleshes this out in another passage, but adds one more element that is interesting for us.

THEN, have students turn to Ephesians 2:8–10 in their Bibles, or simply look down the page on page 19. Read or have someone read the passage. Then, ask something like:

- **How are verses 8-9 similar to the Romans 10:9-10?**
 - *Answer:* Both remind us that we are saved by our faith in Jesus, not by anything we do. This is a gift from God, a result of His great grace.
- **But verse 10 is super instructive for our time together. As we talk about living a life that matters, a life of impact, what does verse 10 say to us about WHY God wants us to come to saving faith in Him?**
 - *Answer:* God has plans to use us! He wants our lives to be transformed by Jesus so that through us, He can transform the world. Part of why we were created by God is to be used by Him. This is a powerful truth and one that changes the way we see our lives and the impact we can have.

FINALLY, begin to wrap up your time in Bible study by saying something like this:

- **How was Paul able to do what he did? Because of the power of Jesus in him. This is the foundation of a life that matters. If we rely on ourselves as the foundation, then we lose the power of Christ working in us. Our lives may make an impact (like Paul's did before Jesus), but it won't be the kind of God-centered, lasting impact that matters. When we embrace this truth and begin looking for how God WANTS to work in and through us, then we open up a new world of possibility for His glory. The question we must ask ourselves is, "where do we stand with God"? Are we in a position, because of our relationship with Jesus, to be used by God to live a life of impact? Let's spend a few minutes thinking about this question.**

Ask if anyone has any thoughts or questions, then transition to the *Wrapping Up* portion of your lesson.

Wrapping Up

- **Student Book Pages**
 - This activity will utilize page 20 in the *Make it Matter* Student Book.
- **Additional Instructions**
 - Make sure students have something to write with.

FIRST, inform students that you want to create some space for them to consider and respond to God about all that you've just discussed. Explain that in just a moment, they are going to spend a few minutes reflecting, just God and them. Explain that there are prompts on page 20 and space for them to write down their responses if they choose. Encourage students to read the prompts on the page; consider reading them aloud for the group. The prompts are as follows:

- **Why is it so important to your faith that salvation comes through faith in Jesus and not through our own efforts?**
- **Where are you in your relationship with God right now? Is anything standing in the way of a more committed devotion to Him?**
- **How are you spending the life Jesus purchased for you on the cross? How is God working through you to change the world?**

THEN, once you've allowed time for students to share, ask if any want to share their responses. Don't push it. But be OK with silence for a few moments. Some students may take a little longer to decide to share. If no one shares, that's OK. Transition to close by saying something like:

- **There are a lot of ways to make an impact. But the only way to make an impact that has eternal value is to let God work through you to change the world around you for His glory. That's one of the reasons He calls us to Himself. Let this lesson be a challenge to you to surrender your life to Jesus, allowing Him to work not only in you but through you.**

FINALLY, ask students if they have any questions or additional comments. Inform students of the *Encounters* devotions located on pages 38-45 in their Student Books. Provide them with a schedule or some structure as to when you would like for them to work through them. (The first devotion is on page 38.)

If there are no more questions, close in prayer for your group.