

# Series Title: 'Inspire a Generation'

## Subtitle: 'Life of Paul & his friends'

**Primary Aim:** This series is all about the life of Paul and how he invested his life in people. He strategically worked through people who were willing to give their lives to investing our lives in people. Paul undertakes a set of what are known as missionary journeys and it is commonplace for him to have people travelling with him as part of ministry teams. We will look at the life of Paul and a number of these inspirational people who help Paul to share Jesus in the early church.

### 1. Paul & Ananias: The People God uses

**Key Passages:** Acts 9:1-19, Philippians 3:1-10 (also shared as part of testimony in Acts 22 & 26)

**Blurb:** This session will introduce the series about what it might mean to invest in people and potentially inspire a generation. The story starts with Saul (soon to be Paul) who was a pretty unlikely choice of person to take the good news about Jesus to the Gentiles. God works powerfully in his life meeting him on the Damascus road and leaving him temporarily blind. God sends a fairly reluctant Ananias to visit Paul and help him to see and begin to work out all that God had for his life.

### 2. Paul & Barnabas: Encouragement

**Key Passages:** Acts 4:36, 9:20-31, 11: 19-30, 12:25-13:52 & 14:1-27

**Blurb:** Barnabas means "son of encouragement": a fitting name for Joseph (Acts 4:36) who sold his field and gave to the early church. We next see him mediating between Paul and the disciples in the early days following his conversion. Barnabas took Paul under his wing and played a key role for Paul in those early days. When it was clear that God was at work in Antioch, Barnabas again went to Paul and brought him back to minister there together for the next year. That was where the believers were first called Christians. Soon the church in Antioch was commissioning Paul and Barnabas as they sent them out.

### 3. Paul, Peter & James: Resolving Conflict

**Key Passages:** Acts 15, Galatians 2:11-21 & 2 Timothy 4:11

**Blurb:** It was not all smooth sailing for Paul as we see when Paul and Barnabas are brought into sharp dispute over the issue of whether the Gentiles needed to be circumcised. The resolution of this dispute begins with a visit to the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem. Peter and James wade in on this debate and a decision is relayed back to the church in Antioch. Disagreement happens again some time later as this time Paul and Barnabas fall out over John Mark. Further conflict is described in Galatians 2 regarding Peter's decision not to eat with the Gentiles. This session seeks to draw out principles for resolving conflict.

### 4. Paul & Timothy: Building Character

**Key Passages:** Acts 16:1-5, Philippians 2:19-30, 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13 & 1&2 Timothy (esp. 2 Tim 1:7-8, 3:10-11)

**Blurb:** In Lystra Paul meets Timothy whose mother was a Jew and a believer but whose father was a Greek. Timothy is circumcised (see 1 Corinthians 9:19-23) so that he can join Paul's team. Timothy gets mentioned a number of times between Acts 16-20 but it is in Paul's letters that we read most about him. Paul tells the Philippians that Timothy takes a genuine interest in their welfare and he sends him to the Thessalonians to strengthen and encourage them in their faith. Paul also writes two quite illuminating letters to Timothy to encourage him to use his gifts and serve faithfully in helping others.

### 5. Paul & Silas: Sharing life

**Key Passages:** Acts 17:1-15, 1 Thessalonians 2

**Blurb:** We first meet Silas when he was sent back Antioch with Paul and Barnabas to convey the decision of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:22-35). He is described as a leader and travels extensively with Paul after he and Barnabas's disagreement. Acts 17 is a particularly good example of Paul and Silas in action as they establish churches in Thessalonica (17:1-9). We can read more about Paul and Silas' ministry in Thessalonica in 1 Thess 2 which shows us the importance of sharing not only the gospel but our lives with those we are seeking to help. Silas is mentioned as a co-author of a number of letters including 1&2 Thessalonians with Paul and Timothy but also in Peter's first letter where he is described as a faithful brother.

### 6. Paul, Priscilla, Aquila & Apollos: Generations

**Key Passages:** Acts 18-19, Romans 16:3, 1 Cor 16:19 & 2 Timothy 2:2

**Blurb:** When Paul visits Corinth he meets Priscilla & Aquila (Jews forced to leave Rome) and he spends time living and working with them. This is not just Paul passing time but it is very strategic: Priscilla & Aquila clearly catch a vision for investing their lives in others and we soon find them working out a similar ministry in their home with Apollos in Ephesus (having gone there with Paul). Apollos then goes on to have an impact more widely. We will begin to see a vision to invest in spiritual generations.