

# INTERSECT

## *Young Adult Discussion Starters*

### UNIT 1: The Letters of Paul

#### SESSION 1: THE SALVATION LETTERS: ROMANS, 1 AND 2 CORINTHIANS, GALATIANS

### Intersect the Word

Romans 3:9, 21-26; 6:1-14; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 1:18—2:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10-21; Galatians 2:11-21

- What does it mean to be “dead to sin” (Romans 6:1-14)? What would this look like in a believer’s life? Do you feel like you’ve died to sin? If not, how can Paul’s words of promise change that?
- Based on Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 1:18—

2:10, why do you think God chose that which is foolish and despised by the world to reveal His wisdom and salvation?

- Why do you think Peter and some of the others stopped associating with the Gentiles? What pressures might have led to this? What might be an example of that in today’s world? According to Paul, why is this wrong? What does he say is the answer to this dilemma?

### Grafted into the Family

“Do we have a lot of work to do once the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ’s relationship to the Father? Are there major changes we have to make in life? Oh, yes. Not in order *to be* a son or daughter. But because, by the grace of the Father, *we now are* . . . We will never get life right on our own. Only the love of God is powerful enough to change our lives. He has so much love for us that we’ve been given every blessing in heaven. If we determine to pull the blessings of heaven down by our own efforts, we will find ourselves stressed, fatigued, and complaining. We will never be satisfied, because we can’t earn a

blessing. But once we have come to see what the Triune God has done for us, well, then change happens” (M. Craig Barnes “It’s Not About You” in *Leadership* [Winter 2001], 37, emphasis added).

- Do you find Barnes’s assessment of salvation on target? Do you think he stresses works too little?
- What does he mean by saying we have changes to make, not in order to be a Christian but because we are Christian? How does this impact the way you live?

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## Persistence

William Greathouse offers the following comments on Romans 6:14-16: “Even after we have settled the matter of who’s in charge, victory over sin is not automatic. It never is. Victory is not a never-changing state. It is a condition, a *relationship with God maintained by obedience* . . . Paul was warning against . . . the false presumption that grace automatically covers known sin in the Christian life. He was trying to quash once and for all any suggestion that the gospel tolerates sin.”

- Do you agree that our salvation by faith requires us to maintain our relationship with God by being obedient to Him? Is this works-righteousness? Why, or why not?
- How would you distinguish between a works-righteousness and righteousness by faith based on Romans 6:1-14?

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## Sola Fide

One of the watchwords of the Protestant Reformation was *sola fide*, “by faith alone.” Martin Luther used those words of Paul to usher in that great turning point in history when people were set free from the legalistic control of the church over their salvation.

Luther himself spent many years searching for relief from guilt and the burden of feeling worthless in God’s eyes. The essential question for him was, and for us is, “How can I, a sinful person, find acceptance in the eyes of a holy and righteous God?” Luther’s

answer came from Paul, especially his words on our salvation by grace through faith in Christ. Luther, and countless others, experienced the realization that God’s deed of love in Christ was “for me.”

- Have you ever had that moment when you realized that God’s deed of love in Christ was for *you*?
- Being as true to your real feelings as you can, what is the real basis of salvation for you?

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## Christian Freedom

Paul’s letter to the Galatians is a book about the Christian’s freedom in Christ. Sometime this week read the letter in one sitting.

One of the issues it deals with is that of law versus grace, and righteousness by works versus righteousness by faith.

Some people, like those in Galatia during Paul’s day, became obsessed with legalism. Others

took their Christian freedom too far: they refused to follow anyone’s rules.

- Would you ever be described as legalistic, or too free?
- Which is the greater danger in the church you attend? among your friends? Why?

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## The Fruit of the Spirit

This week read over the qualities of life in the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. These characteristics are to describe a person who has experienced God’s grace.

- Do these characterize your life? Which ones are stronger, or more present, in your life than others? Why?