



## REFLECTIONS OF A ZEALOT

Acts 26:9-18

## study questions

Use these questions in your community group time to dig deeper and discover how you can apply today's message to everyday life.



### INTRODUCTION

"Religion" is a word that has come to mean a completely different thing in the last couple hundred years. Yet our vocabulary hasn't really caught up.

Even today, as in ages past, everybody would like to know if there is a God, what's this God like, and if he's here, does he have his eye on me? Even for those who have decided there is no such thing as God could be asked, "Then why did you feel like you needed to answer the question? What's the big cosmic deal?"

Most people though think that all religions, whatever the said religion it might be, are about the same thing: Getting you and I to control ourselves and be good.

In launching his movement Jesus created a whole different thing which doesn't fit that, or any religious paradigm most people hold to. And the shocking revelation of the New Testament is that Jesus used some of the least likely characters for his mission control team at the launch.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever heard the idea "All religions are after the same thing"? If so, in what context?
2. In the fewest words possible, define the gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. **Read Acts 26: 9-18 together.** Has there ever been a time when you had to explain why you believe what you believe? What was that like?
  - a. In a word or two like "bystander," "eyewitness reporter," or "articulate defender," describe how Paul is telling Agrippa what happened to him.
  - b. What is Paul's main point about how he went from religious zealot to champion of Jesus' message?
  - c. How does Jesus describe his gospel in a few words? (v. 15-18)
4. Read the enticing conclusion of the story in Acts 26: 24-32.
  - a. What's different about the responses of Festus and Agrippa?
  - b. Why do you think that is?
5. When was the last time you thanked your Heavenly Father for the forgiveness of your sins and a lifetime of intimacy with him? Spend some time doing that in your group today.

### MOVING FORWARD

Our greatest regrets in life come when we believe we must take faith into our own hands, and get our religion *done*. As Dwain said on the weekend, any religion that does not have intimacy with God through forgiveness at its core, will wind up *controlling* you not *restoring* you. That's why what Jesus said is so true. When he sets us free we are "free indeed".

### CHANGING YOUR MIND

**"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us." Ephesians 1:7-8a**