

The Apostle Paul: His Life and Calling

ZChurch Online Bible School

Instructor: Loretta Huggins – Created 07/08/2025

Introduction

Paul, formerly Saul of Tarsus, is one of the most pivotal figures in the New Testament. His transformation from persecutor to preacher, his dual identity as a Jew and Roman citizen, and his profound theological writings make him a compelling subject of study. This workbook will guide you through Paul's background and invite you to reflect on how God uses our past and identity for kingdom purposes.

Lesson Focus (Background Highlights)

- Born in Tarsus, a Roman city known for education and commerce.
- Roman citizen by birth – rare for Jews and a legal advantage in ministry.
- From the tribe of Benjamin – a lineage of royalty and loyalty in Israel.
- Trained under Rabbi Gamaliel – giving him elite education in Jewish law.
- Multilingual – fluent in Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, and conversant in Roman legal customs.
- Practiced tentmaking – an example of humility and vocational skill.

Activity 1: Paul's Identity and Influence

List five aspects of Paul's identity that contributed to his success in ministry.

Which part of Paul's background do you relate to the most? Why?

Activity 2: Strategic Citizenship

Read Acts 22:25–29. How did Paul use his Roman citizenship as protection?

How can your own rights, background, or legal standing be used for the sake of the Gospel?

Activity 3: God Uses Every Part of Our Story

Read Romans 8:28. What parts of your personal history has God already used for good?

Are there pieces of your identity or past that you desire God to redeem or repurpose in this season of your life?

Activity 4: Ministry and Work

Paul was a tentmaker, even while serving as an apostle.

Reflect: How does your current work or skill set support your witness or service to others?

Closing Reflection

Paul's life reminds us that God wastes nothing. Our background, language, education, hardships, and citizenship can all serve the Gospel when surrendered to Christ. God does not erase our past—He redeems it for His purpose.

Personal Prayer

Ask God to help you see your personal story the way He does. Thank Him for the journey and ask for wisdom on how to steward your background as Paul did.

Works Cited

1. Spartacus Educational. (n.d.). *Tarsus*. Spartacus-Educational.com. Retrieved April 29, 2025, from <https://spartacus-educational.com/ROMtarsus.htm>
2. Bible Hub. (n.d.). *Paul: Born in the city of Tarsus*. Retrieved April 29, 2025, from <https://biblehub.com/topical/naves/p/paul--born-in-the-city-of-tarsus.htm>
3. StudyMode. (n.d.). *Historical background of Paul the Apostle*. Retrieved April 29, 2025, from <https://www.studymode.com/essays/Historical-Background-Of-Paul-The-Apost-66405709.html>
4. Slide design supported by ChatGPT (OpenAI), based on biblical study and content developed by Loretta Huggins.
5. All Scriptures are from the King James Version (KJV) unless otherwise indicated.