

# small group **discussion**

For the sermon on May 18-19, 2013  
"Finishing the Race"

## lean in

What are you most passionate about right now?

## look down

The central question in the sermon series, *The Journey of Trust*, is: Can God be trusted? Trusting God is the foundation of obedience and discipleship. We are unlikely to obey God (Jesus) if we don't trust him. So, how can we be assured of his trustworthiness? This week, we'll read the words of the Apostle Paul who makes a passionate defense for his life focused on the mission of spreading the Good News about Jesus. Paul never got over the fact that God had rescued him and had given him enormous grace and mercy. As a result, Paul gave himself fully to the message of God's grace.

**Read Acts 20.1-24.** Paul has called a meeting with some of his closest colleagues in the mission of the Gospel. The elders from the church of Ephesus have come to Miletus to meet with Paul. Paul senses that the race he's running is getting close to the finish. What's the tone of this meeting? What emotions do you feel in the room?

What key words or phrases best articulate Paul's mission? At what cost will Paul go to get this done?

## look in

As we conclude this series on trust, we need to discuss the most important object of our trust: our salvation. Over the past few weeks, we've talked about trusting God when pain, tragedy, and doubt strike our lives. But, there is a deeper issue that we need to be concerned with. Have you trusted God with your sin problem? Do you trust that Jesus is your ultimate rescuer who has freed you from the punishment of your sins? Does your life reflect the joy and gratitude that comes with salvation? Take some time to discuss these three operative words that describe our salvation:

**Repentance** means to change your mind and to turn around. Repentance is acknowledging that our sin is really sin and it's a serious problem. As a result, we change our minds about pursuing sinful ways and turn around in order to follow God's ways. Share of a time when you were moved toward true repentance. How often should repentance happen in our lives?

**Grace** means unmerited favor. It's when we receive something good that we do not deserve or have not earned. Paul said that he was all about, "the task of testifying to the good news of God's **grace**" (Acts 20.24). God's grace is the centerpiece of our salvation. It's a gift that cannot be earned or purchased. If someone were to ask you to describe God's grace in your life, what would you tell them? How would you practically describe God's grace?

**Trust** is living by faith that grace and repentance are truly the way to God. How does understanding grace relate to trust? **Read Hebrews 12.1-3 together.** What words describe repentance? Where do you see grace in this passage? What's the outcome of this? What should we pursue?

Share with the group where you are on your spiritual journey. Are you exploring God's grace? Are you just starting your new life under God's grace? If you are seasoned in the faith, are you about the "task of testifying to the good news of God's grace"? Who is God leading you to share the Good News of grace with this week?



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