

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups that will enable people to begin moving from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

How many times have we each encountered a dead end on the road or in life? They are frustrating, confusing, and time consuming, but for the Apostle Paul in Acts 16:6-10, dead ends were used by God and became key moments that funneled him exactly where God wanted him to be – at a small, coastal town named Troas. For Paul (and for many of us who have reached an apparent dead end), Troas became a place of:

1. **TRUST:** It's easy to miss this, but after a journey filled with dead ends everywhere he turned, Paul still slept when he reached Troas, which was another dead end. If we don't trust God in the dead ends, we may miss what he wants to show us.
2. **TRIAL:** Just because Paul slept doesn't mean he didn't struggle. In fact he later wrote in 2 Corinthians 2:12-13 that he had no peace in Troas! It should be comforting to know that God allows us to feel normal human emotions like frustration when we encounter dead ends. Don't hide those emotions from God even though you trust him to bring you out of your Troas.
3. **TRANSFORMATION:** Paul arrived in Troas as a man who wanted to take Jesus to cities, but he left Troas as a man taking Jesus to continents! Sometimes our dreams are just too small, and it's often in the dead ends that God stretches us and transforms us into the people he can use to do greater things than we could ever ask or even imagine (Ephesians 3:20). In fact, up to 7 books in the New Testament would not have been written if Paul had not been led to Troas through a series of dead ends. Let God use the dead ends in your life to change you in preparation of greater ministry and vision.
4. **TREMENDOUS VALUE:** When we see the transformation take place, we will – like Paul – look back on our Troas with a sense of value. The lessons we learn in these places become priceless, and they become the stories that we will tell over and over again. At the end of his life, Paul asked for a cloak to be brought to him, but not just any cloak! It was the cloak from Troas (2 Timothy 4:13), and he wanted it because he valued what had happened to him, and in him, there. So will you and I!

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What was one helpful, eye-opening, or troubling insight or principle from this week's message?
- What dead ends have you encountered in your life? What, of anything, have you learned through them? Has God transformed them and used them to change your direction?
- Read Proverbs 3:6 and discuss how important trust is as we're being led and funneled by the Lord?
- Psalm 37:23-24 holds some great promises for us when the Lord "delights in a man's way." Talk about how we can bring God joy even when our way includes dead ends
- This week's Big Idea says that **God led you where you are to lead you where you aren't**. How does knowing there is a purpose for the place you're in change how you live?