



a New Community

ACTS PART 2

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

A LIFE-CHANGING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

JANUARY 28, 2024

The story of Saul encountering Jesus on the road to Damascus is one of the most dramatic life-changing stories in the entire Bible. Not only did it shape the way Paul interacted with the world, but it also altered the course of human history. Saul's conversion into the Apostle Paul significantly influenced a world-wide Missions movement that is still ongoing today.

Sometimes, we describe Saul as "bad" and Paul as "good" versions of the same person, but the truth is often more nuanced than the simple boxes our minds create. Saul was a man striving to follow God with his whole being. His problem was he relied on his effort rather than depending on Jesus. As a result, he ended up imprisoning and killing Christians in the early church. Although he thought his motives were pure, his acts were horrific and directly persecuting Jesus.

What can we learn from this man and his relationship with Jesus? Maybe more than we are comfortable admitting!

Discussion Questions.

- Read Acts 9:1-2. What stands out to you about this description of Saul?
- Read Philippians 3:4-6. How does Paul's description of himself before he knew Jesus shape how you read his story?
- Saul was a morally "good" person (except for all the murders, of course). His real problem wasn't his outward behavior. It was his heart. When was a time that your outward behavior looked good, but your heart wasn't in the right place?
- Read Acts 9:3-6. In this section of scripture, we see that "Life change starts with a wakeup call." What do you think Saul is experiencing when he finds out that he is persecuting Jesus?

- Have you ever experienced a "wakeup call" when you realized how your sin affected others and God? If so, share.
- Read Acts 9:7-9. Jesus gives Saul a directive to go to Damascus, and Saul obeys. We learn that "Life change requires a decision." What stands out to you about Saul's experience here?
- When was a time when you felt God was asking you to decide to obey Him? How did you respond?
- How does this passage sum up what it means to share our faith with others (Acts 8:35)?
- Read Acts 9:10-19. The Lord tells Ananias to place his hands on Saul so that Saul can receive his sight back. Have you ever felt God calling you into something that caused you fear? What was the result?
- Saul regains sight and is brought into a new community marked by love. Read Philippians 3:7-11. How did this experience change Saul's life?
- This experience doesn't need to be a one-time event in the Christian life. The same pattern is often seen multiple times as we grow. 1. We have a wakeup call. 2. We have a decision to follow Jesus at a deeper level. 3. We are brought into a new level of love for God and others. Are you in any of these stages now?

Pray Together

Pray for each other that we would depend on God's strength and not our own. Pray that we would have open hearts to God's will and grow to love each other more in the process.