

CALLED OUT To Put Jesus First

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Acts 9:1-8, 17-18 NLT

Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's followers. So he went to the high priest. ²He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of [Jesus] he found there. He wanted to bring them—both men and women—back to Jerusalem in chains.

³As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him.

⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?"

⁵"Who are you, lord?" Saul asked.

And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! ⁶Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷The men with Saul stood speechless, for they heard the sound of someone's voice but saw no one! ⁸Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So his companions led him by the hand to Damascus....

¹⁷So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸Instantly something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized.

CALLLED OUT a journey through the book of ACTS

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Saul's conversion gives us a pattern of transformation takes place:

But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus **example** of his great patience with even I will realize that they, too, can believe in him

The pattern of spiritual awakening and transformation includes:

1. Careful and rational _____

Repentance means to ' _____

Don't copy the behavior and customs of the world; rather, let God transform you into a new person by cleansing you and renewing your mind. Then you will learn to know God's will, which is good, pleasing and perfect.

RESOURCES

- **The Case for Christ** (1998) – Lee Strobel
- **The Case for Faith** (2000) – Lee Strobel
- **Mere Christianity** (multiple printings) – C.S. Lewis
- **New Evidence that Demands a Verdict** (2004) – Tim LaHaye
- **The Reason for God** (2009) – Tim Keller

2. Growing spiritual _____

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.

*I once was **LOST**, but now am found, was **BLIND** but now I see.*

*I pray that the **eyes of your heart may be enlightened** in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people...*

Ephesians 1:18 NIV

3. Intentional _____

*We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? **It is hard for you to kick against the goads.**"*

Acts 26:14 NIV

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Hebrews 12:11 NIV

4. Realization that God is _____

*But the LORD said, "Go, for **Saul is my chosen instrument** to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake."*

Acts 9:15-16 NLT

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

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1. What aspects of the story of Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9, Acts 22, Acts 26) struck you or were noticed or thought about before?
2. Where do you think you need to invest more about aspects of your faith? How would you share your faith to someone who isn't a Christian? What is a current area you are more in this area? What is a current area you are challenged as it relates to matters of faith in the world?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 13:11-12. Why is it important to overcome our short-sightedness and inability to see the long-term? What is required to posture ourselves in such a way that we can be growing us up and opening our eyes to the long-term occurrence of realizing you were blind to something that came up to in your life? How did you come to that realization? What sight into that issue?
4. Name an experience that you have had that was an intentional process coming to pass in your life. What was the experience of being "goaded" or perhaps "driven" by the goads of God?"
5. When did you first discover that Jesus was pursuing you? (ie. that Jesus had been pursuing him)
5. Read Ephesians 2:10. What has been your response to the personal story that Jesus has prepared for you?

Listening Prayer

Jesus, at what point in this reoccurring story do you see me now? Do you have a next step for me to take?