

Series: Centrifugal Faith

Scripture and Background Information for October 18-24.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

In our current series, *Centrifugal Faith*, we focus on how the Gospel changed the people who received it. The account of Jesus's death and resurrection changed the life of believers. The believers were willing to lose their life for Christ, and they went out, telling others about their convictions. The Gospel of Christ spread from Jerusalem to the end of the world.

Background for Acts 9:1-9:

Chapter 7 told us that Stephen was so convinced of Christ's death and resurrection that he was willing to die for his faith. Chapter 9 tells us the story about Saul/Paul, who's conversion was directly influenced by Stephen's death. Luke tells us in 7:57-58 & 8:1 that Saul approved the death of Stephen. He not only approved his death, but the death motivated Saul to go, find Christians, and persecute them.

Today's text gives us the account of Paul being on his mission, after Stephen's death, of persecuting believers. His hate against believers was clear in his effort to go after the church and destroy it (9:1-2). But while on the road, something unexpected happened. Jesus encountered Saul and changed his life. Saul's reaction shows he understood who Jesus was and what that meant for his life. Thus, Saul asked Jesus for guidance for his life. Jesus told him to go to Damascus and wait for further instructions.

Some tools to engage with the text:

1. Scholars see Paul's conversion as one of the striking moments of human history, and especially church history. Note how the resurrected Christ changed Paul's view of Jesus. Jesus was no longer the dead criminal, but the living Messiah. Talk through the concept of what Christ's resurrection should do with our lives. How is that connected to our series?
2. Talk about Jesus's speech in verses 4-5. What does Jesus's speech mean for us today? What did it mean for Saul?

Notice: Saul was the most unlikely person who would believe in Jesus Christ, but he did. Maybe God wants you to go to the person you think is "most unlikely to believe in God." Luke shows us that the Gospel can reach and change everyone!

Scriptures for upcoming weeks:

October 25-31

Acts 10

November 1-7

Acts 13