

Icebreaker:

Growing up, who was a bully in your school or neighborhood?

Questions:

1. In verse 2, early followers were said to belong to “the Way.” Do you like this image of Christ followers? Why or why not?
2. Saul is breathing murderous threats against disciples. Then Jesus said, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” What does that tell you about what Jesus thinks of those who follow him?
3. If the meanest person you know accepted Christ, would you struggle with accepting him or her as a brother or sister in Christ?
4. Saul was an unusual person for God to change and use. We may assume some people are beyond God’s reach. Did you ever feel beyond God’s reach? How does this story challenge those assumptions?
5. If Paul came to ZPC and shared his story, what do you think the response would be?
6. Paul had a dramatic Damascus Road conversion experience. Some of us have dramatic stories of knowing Christ, while some of us have very ordinary stories of coming to know Christ. Is your story dramatic, ordinary or something else?
7. Luke makes a connection between conversion and seeing. How do you see the world differently because of Jesus?

Homework: Pray and consider how God is calling you to give of your time, talent and treasure in 2018.

Prayer:

As you pray for one another, please pray for the following needs in our church family:

- > Prayers of healing for Donna Bahler, Jim Baldauf, Mark Baugh, Jan Edds, Cheri Fuchs, Becky Furste, and Jim Martin.
- > Prayers of comfort for Pam and Bob Bierwagen and family in the death of Pam’s sister and Jim and Dana Croner and family in the death of Jim’s mother.
- > Please pray for the team and guests for the upcoming Kairos weekend.

Info for your group:

> We are hosting our IHN friends again Nov 26-Dec 3. Visit zpc.org to sign up.

Leader’s Notes:

The story of the early church continues with the spread of the gospel to Damascus and beyond. God uses a threatening, murdering villain to spread his message of grace. God uses Ananias, an obedient man in Damascus, to help Paul. God can use anyone to share his Word, even us! We encourage you to keep studying this great story of Saul becoming Paul and the amazing early church and to see how your story is also part of God’s larger story.

[Question 1] The term the Way may have originated with Jews who saw Christians living a distinctive way of life. Early Christians called themselves the Way because Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Do you like the Way as a good descriptor today?

[Question 2] Jesus is saying when Saul persecutes believers, he persecutes Jesus. Jesus fully identifies with his people. This should tell us how much Jesus thinks of us and how much Jesus loves us – enough to fight for his believers and for to convert Saul to Paul.

[Question 3] Paul was apparently a scary and mean man – who would arrest and approve killing Christians (Stephen in Acts 7). Help your group explore what it would be like if someone they really dislike became a Christ follower. Make it personal.

[Question 4] What would it be like for God to use a current day murderer, someone convicted of sexual assault, or even us?!? Moses killed a man; David was a murderer and adulterer, and God used them. God touches all types of people to bring them to faith and to use them for his purposes. No one is beyond God’s reach!

[Question 5] Would the reaction be skepticism, amazement, silence, or acceptance? Maybe some of all of these. It is good to be careful not to lift up or show adulation to new converts too quickly. People who have dramatic conversions can serve Christ but also need time to mature in Christ, as we all do.

[Question 6] Many Christians have “boring” stories of growing up in church and receiving Christ as a child. That’s good news too. If that’s you, you may have been spared going through some troubling personal stories in order to serve Jesus at an earlier age. Your story is valid and should be valued. Claim your story and let God use you to add to your story and to God’s story.

[Question 7] Sight in the common thread in Acts 9. Paul loses his sight; then when he receives Christ he regains his sight and sees everything differently. We too should “see” the world and ourselves differently when we know Jesus. Discuss with your group what that is like for them.